

THE WALKING DEAD

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

I'm not trying to scare anybody. If that somehow happens as a result of reading this comic that's great, but really... that's not what this book is about. What you now hold in your hands is the most serious piece of work I've done so far in my career. I'm the guy that created Battle Pope; I hope you guys realize what a stretch this is for me. It's really not that hard to believe when you realize that I'm delving into subject matter that is so utterly serious and dramatic...

Zombies.

To me, the best zombie movies aren't the splatter fests of gore and violence with goofy characters and tongue in cheek antics. Good zombie movies show us how messed up we are, they make us question our station in society... and our society's station in the world. They show us gore and violence and all that cool stuff too... but there's always an undercurrent of social commentary and thoughtfulness. That's what makes the Romero films so great.

With "The Walking Dead" I want to explore how people deal with extreme situations and how these events CHANGE them. I'm in this for the long haul, and I'm pretty sure Tony is too. You guys are going to get to see Rick change and mature to the point that when you look back on this issue you won't even recognize him. I hope you guys are looking forward to a sprawling epic, because that's the idea with this one.

So, if anything scares you... great, but this is NOT a horror book. I like the term "survivalist adventure." I think that one works well with what we're trying to do. This book is more about watching Rick survive than it is about watching zombies pop around the corner and scare you. I hope that's what you guys are into.

All story commentary aside, at the very least, even if you hate the thing... you've got to admit... it at least looks good. I've been working with Tony Moore for as long as I can remember. I've SEEN Tony's work, I KNOW Tony's work, and I've got to say... just in case you didn't notice... Tony really pulled out all the stops on this one. I can really tell that he shares my immense love for the subject matter. This book is really a thing of beauty. I couldn't be more pleased with how it's turning out. I hope you all agree.

So let us know, tell us what you liked, tell us what you didn't like. Send praise, gripes, whatever... call us names if you want... but let us know what you think of what we're doing. The needed info is somewhere on this page I'm sure, so there's really no excuse. It'll give you something to do while you wait for the second issue, but I promise... it won't be more than a month.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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Well... how about that, A happy ending! Thanks for picking up the second issue. I hope you guys and gals out there are liking what we're doing here. I'm glad to say that if you are... you're not the only ones. Aside from getting a favorable review on the fourth rail (www.thefourthrail.com) by Randy Lander retailers are telling me that they've sold out of their initial orders and in some cases even their overshipped copies. The thing about it is... I'm writing this the day after issue 1 shipped to stores... so we're doing pretty well. In fact... I have enough mail already to do a letters column in issue two, which doesn't happen very often. So... Chris Piers... take it away!

Tony Robert,

I'm impressed. I've been reading each of your collaborations from Battle Pope through Brit, Bestman and now Walking Dead. And I am not speaking lightly when I say that this is my favorite piece of work from either of you. When you mention in your introduction at the back of issue 1, Robert, that this is your most serious piece of work, well, I've read everything you've put out and I agree. I'm very, very impressed.

Tony's artwork in the book is beyond reproach. I love the greytones he's given the work. It may be black and white but it's got depth. Depth in the composition too. The long shots Tony chooses come across as so empty and desolate. When I read this book, I get the feeling that it's the quietest autumn ever. It certainly helps that the trees are all bare. This is a comic where the world itself is dying.

The expressions and body language Tony breathes into Rick Grimes really helps to make him one of the most down-to-earth and believable characters you guys have dealt with. And while I love zombies, I'm equally impressed with the restraint with which you use them. It's not quite a post-apocalyptic story it seems, so much as one character's journey in a killer virus type of story. Or maybe it will be an odyssey for Rick? A journey that takes him to the farthest point from home possible, in which he endures multiple trials before he is finally able to return? Everything in this first issue set the stage for something epic like that. I have faith, having read each of your work that you can follow through on something like that.

I wish you luck and I hope you guys are waiting for a long time to come on this title. Oh, and for anyone who suggests THE WRITING DEAD for a letter column, you deserve to be eaten by a zombie. Letter Hacks is a far superior choice!

-Chris Piers

"Letter Hacks" it is. Thanks Chris, glad to see you're on board for this one... just how many books a month do you buy anyway? I'm glad you noticed the seriousness of this book. Most people might look at this and see gore and monsters and write it off as a "horror" book but I think this is the closest I will ever get to a real heartfelt, quiet, personal story. I take this genre very seriously... I love it for everything it is. I just hope it's coming through in the book.

Robert Kirkman

I've never sent an e-mail to praise a comic book, but after reading the first issue, I just had to write and tell you how much I enjoyed the book. It's great to see an emotionally involved zombie story. I haven't read or seen anything like this in years, so its refreshing to see a book on this topic that not completely splattered in blood and also looks at the strong emotion involved in such a story, being a fan of the Romero films myself. I look forward to every issue after this and hope to see this book around for a while.

-Mike S.

You and me both pal. I'd like to be finishing up issue 14 around this time next year and I think Tony feels the same way. We're really enjoying this romp into realism (heh) and hope to follow this Zombie Apocalypse all the way to the end. Which means we'll be doing this book for YEARS... as long as the safes don't drop to nothing.

The letter in the back of issue #1 said you wanted people to let you know what they think... and the words in, you rock for putting out a zombie comic. To pay tribute to the classic Arrow comics I see you have followed suit with B&W illustrations. I could not ask for anything more. I thought this was just going to be another new comic Wednesday, and then I get an uber-surprise like this. I am glad to hear that you plan on making the series lengthy and that you want to pull in social aspects like Romero stories. Issue #1 had a good mix of everything. Please keep this series alive and kicking.

I am excited to follow Rick in his endeavors. The illustration is fantastic as well. When I flipped the pages to when Rick opens the hospital cafeteria door and finds all of the zombies, my jaw dropped a bit... a perfect depiction of zombie apocalypse. And for gore to hit you in B&W means everything is perfect. I may be telling you something you already know, but a good reference for your comic would be the "Zombie Survival Guide" by Max Brooks. It just hit the stands a month or so ago, despite the humor angle, it is a complete culmination of zombie knowledge.

To sum it up, you have an extremely excited and anxious follower of your new comic. I am looking forward to issue #2 and beyond.

Thank you!

Tom Ales

I wouldn't want to do this book in color. I'm not familiar with "Arrow comics" (anyone care to fill me in?) but I'm a HUGE fan of Night of the Living Dead and to me... this stuff just works better in black and white. Have you SEEN the zombies in Dawn of the Dead? YEEHS they look AWFUL. No matter how GREAT that movie is... those zombies just SUCK... that's all there is to it. Black and White is where it's at for this stuff... it just works better in my mind.

Just read through my copy of Walking Dead #1 and I was VERY impressed.

When the characters are normal folks like you and I, the stakes are higher. Real people dealing with an unreal situation is something you can empathize with. When you do that, it creates it's own tension when they get in danger. The attack in the stairwell was great example- Rick didn't even know how much danger he was in when he almost got bitten. That was a wonderful scene.

If I may make a suggestion or two, I would like to offer this up.

1. Please don't reveal what started it all. The mystery of not knowing is wonderful. The living is where the story is, not the dead.
2. No intelligent zombies. That's silly.

Thank you! Please keep the good work.

He who is Q

Don't worry... we're not going to have any intelligent zombies any time soon... or ever... I mean, what's the point? Intelligent zombies are worse than aquafresh blue zombies. Glad you enjoy the book, O... lay off Picard for a little bit. The guy's getting old.

Man, I just read The Walking Dead and it's fantastic! The art is awesome and it's nice to see Kirkman stretch his pen into more serious ink. The best zombie stories are always about a hell of a lot more than zombies and this seems to be heading in that direction. Nice one guys.

Rick

www.teenagers-from-mars.com

Glad you enjoyed it Rick, this book is definitely about a hell of a lot more than zombies... I think you'll enjoy it more as it goes along. On a side note... anyone out there that hasn't been buying TEENAGERS FROM MARS is really missing out. It's a great indie book with a great story and great art and I highly recommend it.

Hey guys,

First off, I just want say what an amazing book you blokes have here. It's a breath of fresh air compared to the other titles around. I love the whole concept of the post-apocalypse survivalist theme, totally cool stuff. Your book reminds me of the UK film 28 Days Later, which I saw recently here in Australia and absolutely enjoyed.

I hate to be a nitpicker, but there's one thing that nags at me about the first issue. When Rick wakes up in hospital, he uses the elevator. Now with all these zombies running around and most of the citizenry having fled to the big cities. Who's running the power stations? It also happens again when Rick, Morgan Jones and his son Duane visit the police station and Rick turns on the lights in the office. All in all, I reckon is a great comic with a likeable hero character. If you fellas are in for the long haul, then count me in coz I really wanna see what happens on Rick's journey. Keep up the good work.

- James

Places like police stations and hospitals would have back up generators and I'm thinking for the most part that power would remain available until something went wrong. It's not like there's a hamster in a wheel that needs to be fed every day. For the most part people at power stations are just keeping things in working order. So while power is out in MOST places... there are places that are still juiced up. Yeah... 28 days later... sigh... I wish that damn movie had never been made. As much as I LOVE it... that opening sequence was totally "mind-staler" from me. I think you'll agree that as the book goes on it will have almost nothing in common with that movie.

Well, that's all for now folks. I hope you'll be back here next month when things get REALLY interesting. Until then... TELL YOUR FRIENDS.

-Robert Kirkman

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I'm going to start this one off with a clarification of my text piece that ran in issue 1. In that piece I said that I do not consider this to be a horror book. What I meant by that was that the book wasn't intended to solely scare the reader. I in no way meant that I was embarrassed by the horror genre or that I thought this book was "better" than mere horror fiction. I LOVE the horror genre and I embrace it. If this book DOES scare you... GREAT... fantastic... Tony's going above and beyond if that's happening. What I was trying to say is that this is a book about a guy's life... that happens to feature zombies. As time goes on... there will more than likely be entire issues that don't have ANY zombies in them. I hope that doesn't scare any of you away. If I've done my job right, you won't even care. I mean... this issue only had what? TWO zombies? You didn't even notice did you?

Another pressing issue that I need to address... no letter from Chris Piers this month. Those of you out there who pick up all the books I write (or at least some of them) will know that Chris Piers is usually entertaining enough to get a letter printing in every one of my books. The thing is... this issue is going to press before issue 2 is out. Usually... that means that there are no letter run in issue 2 and issue 3 is the first to feature letters and those letters are about the first issue. Well... this book has gotten a TON of mail... a TON. WAY more than ANY of my other books. And that mail started coming in really early. I got the first letter about this book before noon on the Wednesday the first issue shipped. It was THAT day I was putting together the letters column for issue 2 and so I ran all the mail I got on Wednesday in issue 2. One of those letters was from Chris Piers... which is why there is no letter from him in this issue. But next month... when I run mail about issue 2, we'll have a letter from him... unless he quits writing.

Now, on to the mail!

Dear Walking Dead crew,

I would first like to say that earlier this fall I picked up books 1 and 2 of Battle Pope, and as a catholic I have to say these are the most appalling, rude, and hilarious comics I have ever had the pleasure to read! Seeing Jesus being groped by a bunch of women had me rolling on the floor for days. And the artwork simply enhances the action and hilarity. So in short I am fan. So when I heard you guys were making a comic based entirely on zombies I knew I had to pick it up. In truth I think I was expecting something like Battle Pope, a zombie comic full of sick jokes, violence and humor, but to my surprise I got something that was entirely different and I have to say I am still greatly pleased with the results of your first issue. This series brings back good old memories of Romero's Living Dead Series. Where rather than focusing all the attention on blowing away the undead (as they tend to do now in recent flicks) you both bring back the feelings of humanity, which lie behind the waves of zombies. Small scenes like when he collapses after taking the bike really make you understand how horrible such a situation would be. So I can only imagine what disturbing depictions we'll see in the next issue of The Walking Dead! Keep up the good work guys.
-Sean

Like the solicitation says "From the guys behind Battle Pope and Brit comes something COMPLETELY different." I'm glad you liked it. Every now and then... I get the hankering to do something more serious in tone... this time I actually did it.

Funkotronians,

I've been a fan of your books since the early Battle Pope days, and I bought everything associated with it, hell you even printed my letter. But let me get to the point. I just got done reading the first issue of Walking Dead, and let me say, DAMN. That was one of the best zombie titles I've read in a while. The writing was great as usual, and Tony's art is probably his best to date. I guess what I'm trying to say is I can't wait for the next issue, it's going to be a hell of a ride.
Erik C. Jones

Hear that Tony? "The writing was great as usual" but Tony's art is only "his best to date." HAH! Eat it. Score one for the home team. Glad you liked the book Erik. Stick with it, you're in for a hell of a ride.

I would just like to tell you your comic kicks ass! It's one of the best things I've read in a while. Keep up the good work.
-Allen Melvin

We plan to, thanks Allen.

Dead Robert Kirkman,

I have a question. Why is your new comic in black and white? I like it, the story and everything is cool, but why is it in black and white? I usually only like comics in colour. No offense, but if I had known that it was going to be in B&W I wouldn't have gotten it. Are all the issues going to be B&W or is it just this first issue?
~Andy

The Walking Dead being black and white is an artistic decision... just like Spielberg and Schindler's List. We feel that it helps accent the subject matter and contributes to the over-all mood of the story. Our book aside... some of the best comics on the stands these days are black and white... you shouldn't let color dictate your comic buying habits. Expand your horizons... there's a whole world out there that you're letting pass you by.

Hi,

I have just read your wonderful 1st issue of "The Walking Dead," and along with Tony Moore's outstanding line work I'm sure it's going to be a success. Since reading your letter to the readers at the end of the story I was happy to discover that you also have a healthy respect for the genre. I, too grew up with the Romero films, actually I'm one of the few who actually got to see "Dawn of the Dead" at the theaters when it was

initially released

in its limited run. Being a teen at the time, yes I snuck in, something resonated in me that slowly developed over the years as I grew older and more well-read. I'm a graduate student now at Oklahoma State University, majoring in English and writing, and now have the temperament and hopefully the skills to appreciate what was scratching at the base of my spine those many years ago. It was a fear, a fear of what mankind can become when faced with such a terrible adversity. The horror of watching people succumb to their more base instincts, or the exaltation when people can rise above their stations is what intrigued. The extenuating reaction of how we respond is the drama, not the rotting corpses scratching at the door. What scared me the most was the thought of how quickly civilization can crumble when infected from within. The whole social commentary Romero injected in his works and what I'm pleased to see you and Tony perpetuating is what infected me to appreciate this genre. So here's to you, Robert and Tony, thanks for keeping the integrity of the living dead intact and not going for the cheap thrills of gratuitous gore. The one aspect of issue 1 that had me spellbound was the female zombie bicyclist who lay rotting away as Officer Grimes reacts. Deeply tragic and moving at the same time, especially when he returns to end her misery or is it? Anyway that scene burned in my mind and established to me that the two of you are on the crux creating something fantastically engaging. Thanks for your time, and I'm anxiously awaiting the rest of the saga.

Sincerely,
Patrick Wheeler

I'm glad people are getting what was going on with the female cyclist zombie. That was a tough scene to do with little or no dialogue and I think Tony did a swell job portraying the emotions I wanted shown there. I'm really trying to play this in as realistic as I can and it's very gratifying that you people are responding to it. I have yet to receive a "less drama, more comedy... I mean, you guys did BATTLE POPE!" letter... and for that, I am thankful.

Hey, I just wanted to say that I really enjoy your comic "The Walking Dead." I have a few questions. How long did it take you to draw it, and not to be rude or anything but how much do you make off it? Keep up the good work.
-JARULES615

Tony and I have been working a total of eleven years on The Walking Dead and have to date made nearly 7.8 million dollars off it. Glad you liked the book.

I read The Walking Dead #1 yesterday. I'm a bit of a freak for zombies and stuff, so I picked it up at the store this week. I really didn't know what to expect, but I knew the art looked fantastic so it'd be good for that at least.

This has the potential to be a great comic, it's got sort of a Preacher vibe going on. The art is amazing, and reminds me ever-so-slightly of Steve Dillon (who is one of my favorite artists of all time), and the hero is on a mission that's not exactly defined. There are other parallels too, but that's not the reason I'm writing this. The Walking Dead definitely has a feel all it's own.

Rick Grimes is a strong character, and I'm really looking forward to him getting to Atlanta. I've got a sneaking suspicion that it won't go too well for some strange reason. ;) Also, I hope we haven't seen the last of Morgan Jones and Duane. I don't know how you guys did it, but I actually care about what happens to these characters. One issue in... damn.

Great art (love the gray tones!), a promising premise, strong characterization... yup, I'll be buying this for the long haul. I'm a little embarrassed that I didn't preorder it. I'll be sure not to make that mistake on future issues.
-Jim Clarke

Don't sweat the preorder thing... you came around in the end. Though, from now on I hope you make it a habit of informing your retailer ahead of time that you would like an issue set aside for you. These guys carry the weight of the industry on their backs, it's the LEAST we can do to let them know when they have a guaranteed sale. Oh, and thanks for the Preacher comparison, that's a favorite around these parts. The Jones' will appear in the book again, I promise. It may be a while though.

Hi I just wanted to say that your comic book kicks major a\$\$ => just in your first issue the story takes on some major depth and feeling. I must say though that I was a little skeptical of getting a black and white comic, but I got to say it adds something to the book kinda pulls you into the story more. The art is spectacular and has a realistic look to it, it goes great with the story. Plus the story's more believable than most of the other zombie things I've seen on screen. Oh, and by the way don't bother going to see House of The Dead compared to your guys' book it was the most stupidest thing ever made, The Walking Dead has it beat 100 to 1.
Eagerly awaiting the next issue
Paul Orosco

Only 100 to 1? From what I've heard (I've yet to see the movie) that's an insult! All joking aside, I'm glad you didn't let the black and whiteness of the book hold you back. I can understand it when people say they dislike flat black and white art, with no tones. For some, I can see how that might look unfinished, and yeah... that's a matter of opinion. But what Tony's doing on this book is more detailed and painstakingly labored over than MANY color books. The detail is there... it's just not in full color. I personally prefer the interiors to the covers. I

think Tony's work looks WAY better in gray tones... or at least as good. I'm glad you agree.

Robert & Tony

First of all, I very seldom write letters to a comic. But after reading Walking Dead no.1, I have to say, WHOA, and I'm definitely on board for the second issue. It is obvious that both of you are very talented. Rick Grimes is an intriguing character and the book reminded me quite a few times of the recent film, 28 Days Later. Which is not a bad thing. :) I realize that this is a little bit nit-picky but while I found the rest of the book to be enjoyable, I found the sex scene in the preview in the back to be.....well, out of place. However I don't know if that was your choice to put that in there or Image. Anyway, keep up the good work and you may hear from me again soon.....

Sincerely,
Andrew Rootz

Sex scene? Yeah... I don't know WHO wrote THAT crap but I'd rather it NOT be in the back of any of my books from now on. Heh. I see what you're saying. Previewing my other new book, "Cloudfall" was probably not the best idea. Oh, well... live and learn. It's really not a smut book... you should all go out and pick up a copy! Oh... and thanks for mentioning 28 days later... I'm not the least bit sick of that comparison.... sigh. For the record... and at the risk of coming off like sour grapes... this book was planned to come out in March but Image wanted to hold back until October so it could get a push with "Horror Month." Had things gone according to plan, this book would have been out MONTHS before the American release of 28 Days Later and would have been EXACTLY the same as it is now. And yeah... it was out in Great Britain before then... but I've never been over there! I wouldn't have seen it! Anyway... for the record, I LOVE that movie. I think it's great. It set out to do a lot of what I want to do in this comic. The difference is it had 2 hours and I've got as many issues as I WANT!! Three years from now... the comparisons will be a distant memory... as long as sales hold. Oh... that will be a grand time indeed!

Hey there,

I just wanted to drop a line concerning the first issue. I'd seen it commented upon on the Millarworld message boards but I just really, really wanted to know: are the similarities between the start of the first issue and the movie 28 Days Later intentional or simply coincidental?

See, I first picked up Brit and really enjoyed it, so when I saw the ad for Walking Dead at the end, I was really looking forward to it and then when I got my hands on it, and read those first scenes, I was a bit disappointed. However, I read the whole book and just really enjoyed it despite the surface similarities to 28 Days Later. I'm eager to see where the book is going and hope it starts to explore some new directions in the zombie genre.

Cheers lads for an interesting first issue, can't wait for number 2.
Jas.

See above... while I go hang myself.

Hey Robert and Tony,

I read the first issue of Walking Dead today and I have to say it looks pretty promising... even if the zombie genre is pretty tapped out at this point. Rob's writing is great as usual (did I mention I'm a big fan?) and I love Tony's art (a little Erik Larson-esque in places, which is never a bad thing). I was a bit disappointed at first that the art was B&W, but having thought about it, I think it works in conveying the sombre, grim tone of the story. Plus, you can be as gory and disgusting as you like in B&W without grossing readers out.

Out of curiosity, the opening sequence of Rick in hospital reminded me a lot of the second scene in Danny Boyle's excellent 28 Days Later where Jim wakes up in a deserted London hospital. Have you seen the movie and was this an homage of sorts?

Anyway, the comic's great and I look forward to reading issue two.
Cheers,
Dann Lennard

God had some extra "Ns" lying around that day hmmm? Yeah... the black and white thing does help out the gore and keep it from getting too graphic... I hadn't thought of that. And yeah... Danny Boyle can kiss my ass.

I'm really looking forward to your new book.
Awesome artwork; story; a perfect filler for any lover of Romero movies.
Paul Nunes

Yeah, see... I'm ripping on Romero... not Danny Boyle. I mean... have some respect for the classics. If this book is anything... it's a love letter to George Romero... to make up for all those nasty letters I've sent him demanding that he get off his ass and make the fourth Dead film.

Robert,

My name is Rhonda. I wanted to respond to your request with thoughts about your comic "The Walking Dead".

This story is full of irony. My husband and myself were in Comic book World in Florence, KY. He was looking for something else to read in addition to his usually list. I saw a copy of your comic book and thought it would be right up his alley. I pointed it out, he looked it over and decided to give it a try.

We came back home to Dry Ridge, KY; which happens to be in Grant County. After he read the book, he suggested that I take a look at it.

I was a bit surprised to say the least when on the first page you have Grant County in the book. I stated out loud "Hang on a sec here, where is this guy from?". My husband then flipped a few pages and showed me Cynthiana Police Station. When I saw that, I knew that you had to have come from close by.

My husband went on doing a few other things and I read. I finally got to the page where you were asking for thoughts and feelings about the book. When I looked at the address and saw Lexington, KY, I laughed out loud. I pointed this out to my husband, he then asked me if there was really a Harrison Memorial Hospital. I said probably, I know we have a Harrison County.

I informed my husband that I was going to write to you and share our funny little story with you. This book was bought by sheer luck. And you are writing about our little corner of the world. It makes me proud to know this.

As to your story, you have hit the nail on the head with where you are going with this, based on this story and your comments about what you were trying to accomplish. My husband, two kids and myself love scary movies with lots of details. But you have touched on about the only thing that in any way ruffles my husband. The kids are easy to spook. I just love the thought process of figuring out what is next. But Roger has always been a Zombie person.

We are looking forward to the next issue.
Thank you for your time,
Rhonda Moore

Yeah, the idea to actually set the geographically in our stomping grounds was something I thought would be fun. Of course... I didn't actually check to see if there WAS a prison in Grant County. I figured most people wouldn't even notice and to be honest I think you and your husband were the only ones. As you can see now, we don't STAY in Kentucky but I'm sure we'll go back eventually. Oh, and Harrison County is where Cynthiana is and Harrison Memorial is in Cynthiana. That's where Tony and I went to high school. That rinky dink paper there should do a story on us... it couldn't hurt to have the locals behind us.

Well Mr. Kirkman, it would appear that you have a noteworthy bit of work here.

I own and operate a comic store in the bustling Metropolis of Toronto. So, you can obviously imagine the number of comics I

see. That point is of course mutually exclusive of the fact that I am in Toronto, that was merely a geographical quantifier.

At any rate, I do not read every book that comes in to my store. That is by choice and by necessity. I do not have time for such a self-indulgence.

Having said that, I also am not much one for black and white comics. As you are acutely aware, comics ARE a visual medium, and B+W tends not to catch my eye.

Of course all of this is moot here. Your latest endeavour has blown all of my self-induced barriers by showing me a NEW B+W comic that is right up there with the best of them.

My short-list of books to read on a regular basis just got a bit longer.

Thanks a bunch
Daryl C. Collison
3rd Quadrant Comics

Cool, man... it's always good to hear about a retailer that is getting behind a book. I'm glad you liked it... in spite of its lack of color. I hope by now, after seeing the third issue, you realize it's for the better.

Robert and Tony,

Just bought and read the first issue of your comic The Walking Dead and I had to tell you that I thought it was great. I've considered myself a real zombie fan for life, ever since I watched Night of the Living Dead when I was six. I have dedicated my life to buying pretty everything that I see with the words zombie or walking dead on it. As I was reading your comic I was thinking that this comic is really the movie that I have been waiting to see since the last Romero movie Day was released. I think that you guys have nailed it when it comes to a story that a lot of zombie fans have been craving. I am looking forward to your next issue and I wish you guys a very long run.

Best of Luck
Michael Pascarella

P.S.

What is the story with the female bike-riding zombie? Was that someone that Rick knew or just the first thing that Rick killed and it made him emotional, due to the fact that all of this was happening.

Well... the story behind that zombie is that it was probably the most horrific thing Rick had ever seen. The stuff in the hospital was so fast that he probably didn't have time to realize exactly what was happening. This thing, though... was just lying there... trying to eat him... but it had been torn apart so badly that it couldn't move. Rick's got a soft spot for the ladies and this hit him particularly hard. At the end, he returns for the sole purpose of putting it out of its misery before starting his trip to Atlanta to find his wife and son.

The Walking Dead:

I saw it was shipping on the diamond website and thought to myself "that's a cool name. I wonder if it's about Zombies?" I told my wife about it and bam, we're at the local shop picking up the book. One look at the cover and I about shouted in joy "a zombie book!" and she says two words "get it."

I'm incredibly excited about this book. Initially my wife says "it's like 28 days later" given the initial hospital scene, but I'm a little more reserved on my judgment. Sure it begins in a hospital, but it quickly ditchs that cliché.

I'm so damn glad that someone is producing a GOOD zombie book! I have faith you'll capture the Romero Zombie approach rather than the slasher gimmick. Zombie movies and good fiction are about people vs people with zombies in the background. After reading #1 I feel comfortable with you taking on my favorite monster, (second only to the creature from the black lagoon)

Il love your book and am telling my buds @ work about it.
Best of luck on you new book!!!!!!

- Bryan

I'm glad you're not jumping the gun like your wife did (stupid girls). You'll see the similarities melt away as the book continues. I swear.

First off... congratulations. You put out a wonderful first issue of what I hope will continue to be a great story. Zombies are my all time favorite baddies. Sadly, there is actually few decent stories out there about them. Thanks for filling in the hole a little more. And for doing it with such class. You brought some humanity back into the zombie genre. Thanks again.

I must admit, I was a little wary with the hospital opening (seems to be done a lot these days) but with the next scene, Rick finding that zombie woman beside the road, well... WOW. It was powerful. I anxiously await the next issue. Good job Mr.Robert and Mr.Tony. Good job indeed.

Legend Montgomery

Glad you liked it. Besides 28 Days Later... what other zombie story started with the main character in a hospital? Am I forgetting something?

Hi,

My name is Kenn Baker, I'm a penciler/Inker. I just finished reading issue one of "The walking dead", I have three words for you. Un-Fucking-Believable...I love the whole Zombie Genre, but I agree with you that the appeal isnt the scare the shit out of you crap, it's the Romero "Makes you think about how fucked up we are as a societal whole" aspect that I really enjoy. And I think you guys nailed it. Since this is only the first issue, I implore you, please don't disappoint us later.

Seriously guys, the art is great, the story moves well, and I'm intrigued enough to buy the next twenty issues just to see where it goes. Since I believe too much praise makes people lazy, I have to point out two small mistakes, one on the artist's behalf, and one on the writer's. Tony Moore, I luv your style by the way, on page one, panels 5 and 6, the gun is shot out of the officers left hand in panel 5, in panel six, he's holding his bleeding right hand. A very small error, which you more than made up for with the rest of the book. Robert Kirkman, on the "The Walking Dead" page, where you explained the intent of the book, you misspelled the word "On". "Tony really pulled out all the stops one this one". Small mistakes though guys, doesn't take away from what you've started here.

Kenn Baker

Well... we never claimed to be perfect. Though Tony's screw up was MUCH worse than MINE. I add and "e" and he messes up and entire panel! Man... that guy needs to practice.

Dear Robert & Toney,

I just read Walking Dead #1 tonight- freaking awesome! I love this title- and thank you for making it an ongoing monthly series..! I need my monthly zombie fix!

The story and set up was perfect for a zombie tale! The art was excellent- I really liked how Tony included gray tones in the art. This really makes B&W comics look good, in fact it adds a mood (especially to a title like this) that color cannot. Were you to ever offer this in color, I would still prefer B&W.

I liked the lead character Rick Grimes- good ol' country cop and very likeable. Will we find out what happened to his partner at the

beginning of the story?

My dislikes- NONE!

You've done what I didn't think was ever possible- made an Image title (Walking Dead) my favorite comic above all my Marvel, DC and Crossgen titles I collect. Really...didn't think that'd ever happen.

Keep up the excellent work gentlemen and I'll make sure to get my friends hooked on this title (BTW this is a perfect comic for non-comic readers to try as well).

Sincerely,
Deon Witherspoon
Gig Harbor, WA

P.S.

If you ever do have a letter column you're certainly welcome to print my e-mail if you wanted to. Not that I'm expecting it- just the fact that you'll read this email and know how much I appreciate this new comic series is good enough for me. Take care!

We read ALL the mail. I may not respond to any of it in email form but I'm printing almost everything we got here and we do value the input. Will we see Dale again? As you can see in this very issue, YES!

I just picked up your first issue, and it's everything I was hoping it would be. When I first heard of this, I couldn't wait for the release. The illustrations are very strong very much follow the idea of zombies. Also I feel that the story line and plot will make for an exciting series. It's good that the character is moving around to different places, instead of just staying with that man Morgan Jones in the house. That certainly would take away the freshness of the story.

Also, with that write up at the end, I completely agree with you. There are no better zombie movies than Romero's. For me, personally my favorite movie would have to be Day of the Dead. It just seems to have a better visual aspect to it, and if he was able to create the script he originally had, I think everyone would rank that as the best Zombie film ever. I wish you luck, and I think that you're doing the zombie genre justice with this comic release.
-George

I actually think the version of Day that got made is better than the original script. I think the original script was a bit over the top. It was cool, and would have been GREAT had it been made... but I really like the way it came out. I don't think we're missing anything by the fact Romero had to cut back for budgetary reasons.

Don't change a thing.
The more I read TWD #1 the more I think it's one of the best comic books Image has published to date, and potentially one the best series as well.
Keep it about survival and change, which is what Zombie stories should be all about.
Keep it about Rick.
Keep it in black and white.
Maintain continuity at all costs.
AND PLEASE keep Tony Moore for at least the first 12 issues, if you can't keep him indefinitely.
One question: Is this going to be Monthly or Bi-Monthly?
Thanks for making this book and putting it out, can't wait 'til #2.
Jeremy C. Flowers

We plan to stick to your advice. As far as I know Tony's in for the long haul. I can't imagine doing this book without him. I hope you've caught on by now that this is a monthly book.

Hello,

I picked up your book when it came out and read it. I did enjoy the issue. The only thing that bothers me about it is that the beginning reminds me a lot of the movie "28 Days Later". Just with the character waking up the hospital not knowing what is going on and looking around for people. I don't know what the premise of how the zombies came about it in your book, but I hope that it steers away from the ideas in that movie.

With that being said, I did really enjoy the book. I enjoyed the dialogue and the art a lot. The cover art really stands out; I like how Tony made Rick look very "Clint Eastwood". I am looking forward to reading the next issue.

Sincerely,
Derak Morrell

Oh, and for the record... I'm not pissed that people are making this comparison... it's a valid comparison. I just wish Danny Boyle hadn't came up with the same idea I did a year before I did. I swear... this book will be NOTHING like 28 Days Later in the long run. Let's not dwell on this.

Hey there

Just a quick note to say congrats on an outstanding first issue that met my expectations and went beyond them... WAY beyond them. You managed to get a decent intro to what looks to be a promising story and a character that I eagerly wait to find out more about and find out about a way messed up world as he does.

Also while I originally groaned at lack of colour I think it was a very smart move. Colour would have detracted from the overall effect - for me anyway - and Romero's classic was in Black and White and was way more effective than it's technicolour sequels or remakes, so whether this was a conscious or financial decision, keep it that way as long as possible.

So that's it. Kept it quick and as to the point as I could and looking forward to the next issue (which can't get here fast enough.)

Later
Craig Wood

I can't say that the financial aspect of doing books in black and white was never brought up but I promise it wasn't the deciding factor. This book will ALWAYS be black and white.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Very interesting book you have on your hands here. I flipped through your book in the comic store and decided to give it a try. The art is fantastic! I have never seen Terry Moore's art before but honestly it was his cover that drew me in. But what I am wondering is where is this story going? Is this an ongoing series? After reading your speech in the letter column I am hoping for an epic story like

Preacher. Should I be expecting something like that? I don't like horror books, so I was pleased when you said that you don't consider this book a horror. Keep up the good work,
Michael Conte

Yes, an epic like Preacher is the goal... whether or not we pull it off remains to be seen. Oh and Terry Moore? What does this have to do with Strangers in Paradise?

Hey guys,

I just put down "The Walking Dead" ...
I had been looking forward to it for a while, actually since I picked up the first issue of "Brit". Black and white artwork is so much more interesting, (to me anyway), than full color. That is why I bought Brit in the first place. A few comic book stores out here where sold out of the #1, I had this guy put it aside for me while I raced to his store to grab it. Glad I did, it was everything I had hoped for.

Fantastic work, keep it up.
J-S

Go Black and White comics! Woo!

Hey,

Just thought I'd drop a line & tell you how great I think this book of yours is. It's been awhile since I actually looked forward to a comic coming out. I've been waiting for this one since I read the preview. I love almost everything about this. Congrats to Tony on the great art & to you for the great story & characters. I'm glad you chose to go the way of the story rather than just run n gun blood & guts way like almost every zombie flick out there. Also I love how you left what happened & all a mystery. And gave Rick a point, to find his wife & son. I made my girlfriend (Stacy) read it & she really enjoyed it. Of course she has little to no patience so she wanted to know how everything got like that. I told her what I always tell her, "Good things come to those who wait." So a month must be torture for her. But I can wait. The only complaint I have is the black & white. It's cool & all, but when you see the cover & how good it can look in the dull colors, kinda makes ya wonder why not just do the whole book like it. Or you can go the "Sam & Twitch" way with the dark & gritty colors. Either way, no matter what I'm here to stay. So keep up the Great work.

Sincerely,

Jason Capps

P.s.

I got a cool title for the letter page "Obituary's" Let me know if I win anything. you can print this to if you want, I don't mind.

Sorry, "Letter Hacks" won last month. What does Chris Piers win? The opportunity to get every letter he sends in printed in a comic!

Hello Robert Kirkman. I'm a new fan. I doubt I'll read Capes or Invincible because they are super hero books. But, I just love The Walking Dead. I'm an aspiring comic writer. As a student of the medium, I easily recognize the excellence in your work. The pacing created with the strategic use of the nine-panel grid and shocking splash pages. You didn't rely on stereotypes for cheap entertainment. The way you introduce the audience to this world with minimal characters for maximum impact. And I can't forget Tony Moore. His artwork is perfect for black and white. It doesn't feel lacking by the absence of color. But back to you. You are a great talent to the medium. We are better for having you. And as long as you continue to pursue comics, I'm buying your' works.

New fan for life
Brent McKibben

Man... super-heroes are cool. You should give them a shot... at least MY books.

Dear lords of the Undead,

I just read your first issue and I like what I see. Your presentation of the classic style "survival horror" story is well done. I get a real sense of desolation and emptiness as I read through the issue. Much like Night of the Living Dead, the setting (flesh eating zombies) is just the vehicle for the real motivation in the story. You can see what type of person officer Rick Grimes is by his interaction with Morgan Jones and his son Duane. The fact that he is a police officer helps motivate him to maintain a semblance of normalcy in a world that obviously is no longer normal. He is very optimistic and stating things that would make you believe that things will eventually return to normal. Whether or not he'll be able to maintain that outlook remains to be seen. Perhaps over time, the more he is exposed to what's happened in the world, he may become hopeless and grim. Overall though I like how it has started out and I'll be around for the remainder of the journey. Good luck and keep knockin' 'em dead.

Don Churby

Trust me... we'll see tremendous growth in Rick Grimes over the life of this series.

Hi I go to university in Newcastle in England and I buy a lot of comics...about 15 a week...I've just read the walking deadIts amazing!!!!!!!!!!!! I mean I waited for years for a zombie comic ever since night of the living dead and dawn of the dead... your art is great and gritty and story really good... I just hope it isn't delayed....and comes out monthly...but this has been the best comic I have read from image in years!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! admittedly image have been very disappointing recently....but this comic rocks, along with 30 days of night one of the scariest comics I've read...

thanks
zein mayassi

Don't worry. We don't plan on being late any time soon. We plan on putting a solid 12 issues a year out as long as we can. Give Image another chance, man. There's tons of good books coming out of here these days. It's worth another look. I think Jim Valentino has really turned this place around.

Before I try and make you feel bad, let me suck up so as to get you to read the rest of my pointless email, just one I'm sure among a bombardment of nerdy and pretentious zombie and comic book fans:

First I'd like to say a personal thanks for doing something zombie related that does not suck. There are so few good zombie flicks out there... While I love gore, I hate bad storytelling. One reason I HATE Fulci movies (besides the bad acting, horrible directing, senseless plot) is that there's no real social commentary underlying the story, which makes for the true horror of a film. For me, that's what Zombie stories should be about, and you've captured that.

That being said, there's weaknesses in every story, no matter how good. Rick so far is a messy character--his emotions keep changing with no apparent transitions. One minute he's crying the next he's quipping one-liners like "lets go SHOPPING". It's all 100% smarter than anything marvel or DC puts out these days, but these kinds of lines stick out like a sore thumb...There's also a bit of inconsistency of Rick's reactions: He's quick to get ammo and fire upon most incoming zombies, but you also paint him as a sensitive soul and giving a mercy killing to a helpless zombie...Why this zombie and not the others? Why he feels sorry for some zombies and trigger-happy with others is unclear.

I only cringed at one line during the comic: "I feel guilty for laughing"...it wasn't too bad but...ok I thought it was really bad. A lot of times I erase all the lines in my comics I've written manically--just replacing all the dialogue if one little thing doesn't fit. That's what I wanted to do to your comic after reading that line. I even got out a bunch of white out just to blotch it out from my field of vision, whereupon it was rupturing my retinas.

Ok enough about that line sucking (goddamn it sucks. i mean, wow.).

Some suggestions: Keep making it funny without it becoming camp, keep up the satire and human conflict, don't make it take itself too seriously, and most importantly: DONT LISTEN TO PEOPLE LIKE ME!!!

Great work!
-Doug

I LIKED that line... what's so bad about it? Also... Rick's a messy character?

Good. He's not supposed to be perfect, he shook up, he should be all over the map. This guys is experiencing a lot. Also, pulling the gun on the fence zombie was a reflex, he didn't shoot at it immediately. He's a small town cop... he's never really shot anything... but he does know how to pull his gun out at stuff. But enough defending myself... I SUCK. I live with it... so can you.

And folks... that's it! This is the longest damn letters column I've EVER been involved with. I mean... damn.... this thing is HUGE!! Keep those letters coming folks. I'd like to be able to do this EVERY issue. Ads be damned!! See you next month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Welcome back, people. Glad you could make it back to our little party. I realize this issue is shipping at least two weeks later than it should be. It's still in the month it was supposed to be out but technically it is a bit late. My good pal Tony took a little extra time on Brit: Cold Death (which should be out well before this issue) and because of that this issue was finished a bit late. Things are back on track though and we should regain the two weeks we lost over the next two issues. So yeah... we're not even technically late... but I just thought I'd give you fellas and fellettes a heads up.

In other news the response to this book just continues to grow. Sales on this issue are actually back on par with issue 1 and it appears we are on a positive sales curve, gaining readers each month. This is fantastic news because it means it looks like Tony and I might actually get to stick on this book for the long haul which as I'm sure you all know is up in the air with new books... I mean issue six could have been our last issue, but with sales what they are and being on the rise... things are looking good for the longevity of this book. And we owe it all to you, thanks. Keep spreading the word.

Now, speaking of spreading the word... we've got a TPB coming up. Shipping in April, on the SAME DAY as issue 7 comes "The Walking Dead: Volume 1: Days Gone Bye." We're doing something a little different for this TPB. It's going to be 144 pages, containing issues 1-6... for a measly \$9.95. Now before you all start complaining about how the single issues cost you guys way more than it would have to just wait for the trade... keep in mind that if you hadn't been buying these issues that trade wouldn't exist. Also, people buying the TPB won't be getting the swell covers and dull letters columns that you guys got. The reason for the low price is hopefully to get new readers to pick up the book on a whim. Also, we're shipping it the same day as issue 7 so people can get both and be instantly caught up. So tell your friends the TPB is coming and help keep this book on the racks for a good long time.

Well, with all that out of the way... we might as well answer some letters. That's always fun, right? We're still getting mail on issue 1 as well as issue 2 so the letters will be a bit mixed up between the two issues.

Letter Hacks,

A happy ending in issue 2? What are you doing here? You guys are breaking down people's expectations and going in interesting directions is what you're doing. I can't wait to meet the new supporting cast. More fodder.

Congrats on the good press Walking Dead has been receiving at sites like Newsarama and 4thrail. It's selling great at my store before I even have a chance to talk it up. It deserves it. Tony's art is just gorgeous in this book. The establishing shot of Rick and his car, the desolate Atlanta and more are just epic and convincingly real.

In some of those interviews they bring up the similarities to how the film 28 Days Later opens with the main character in a coma. Well, that's where the similarity ends, I'm sure we can all agree. And for the record, it's a sci-fi convention. They did it in Resident Evil too, which predates 28 Days Later and they did it in Day of the Triffids. It's a convention that we have probably all thought of or seen at some point. It's an idea in our subconscious. You showed us how it happened though and that's important. You showed us Rick's partner, you showed us Rick didn't have an opportunity to shoot (and following from issue 1, it seems he's probably never had to shoot anyone before). There's enough originality there that I believe readers will go back to that come trade paperback time and be able to appreciate it for what it is.

Questions:

- 1) Do you have an ending in mind? Is this a finite series?
- 2) What are the best and worst zombie films?
- 3) Any chance of printing a photo of Tony in his zombie suit? I heard he made one in an interview.
- 4) Is Jason Vorhees a zombie?
- 5) Are you a zombie?
- 6) Can you give us your hard and fast zombie rules or do we need to learn them through the progression of the story?

I like the new black covers on the back too. They're good for preserving my fingerprints for posterity.

Love,
Chris Piers

Yeah... 28 Days Later... bring that up again. Ugh.

- 1) Not at the moment, no. I seriously doubt this book will go on forever but at this point I'm plotted well into the future and I see no end. Think of it like a lifetime... Rick's death is not planned, I don't know when it will occur and I don't even know if the book will end when it does occur. We'll see... that's part of the fun. So no, no planned ending at this time.
- 2) I've never really seen one that I absolutely hated. The Romero Films, Cemetery Man, Undead, Zombie... there's a lot that stick out as favorites. You gotta mention Dead Alive too... that one's a classic.
- 3) Yeah, if Tony can did one out for me, I'll print it. Tony?
- 4) Technically... I think so.

- 5) Only on leap years.
- 6) You'll pick them up as you go along... they're all pretty straight forward, if people bug me, I may print them later.

Just don't commit any crimes with any of my comics left at the crime scene.

Holy Crap! What a great comic, its about time somebody covers this material and does it right. Keep up the good work guys and please let us know how we can subscribe, cuz I think this comic is gonna be around for a long time.

-Lester Palma

No real subscription system is set up... we're just not capable of doing that here at Walking Dead Central. There are plenty of comic shops that you could reserve the book at and plenty of mail order companies online that will mail the book right to your doorstep. Might I recommend www.khepri.com?

Hey guys,

I just finished reading issue one of The Walking Dead, and I have to say, it's not only one of the best zombie stories I've read, it's just a really good read all around! The story is already captivating, and the artwork fits the story perfectly! Take it from someone that loves zombies and all their flesh-eating antics, this looks to be the start of a great book. I can't wait for issue 2! Keep up the great work!

Ryan Kasnick

We plan to, thanks.

Hi. Matt Bronleewe here. I'm a record producer who's jumping into the wacky world of publishing comics next year. Am I nuts? Maybe. Who cares, cause I love it. Anyway, just wanted to tell you I just read The Walking Dead and loved it. And I'm not a big zombie fan, usually. Loved how quiet it was. Loved how creepy and lovely it was. Dug it entirely. Will buy every subsequent issue without caution and will pass along the good word.

THANKS!

mb

You are crazy! Publishing comics is for the birds, trust someone who did it... stick to record producing. Glad you like the book, though. Keep reading and keep writing.

To whom it may concern,

First I would like to say I loved the first issue. I can't wait to keep reading this series. I would also like to say that I like black and white comics but I would love to see this one done in color (like the cover) If this doesn't happen than its cool with me. I understand the black and white gives it that vintage feel. Just wanted to give you my 2 cents. Thanks for a great comic book

Sincerely
Steve B

Yeah, the covers look nice but I think if the whole book looked like that they wouldn't be special. And while the covers look spectacular in color I just don't think the sequentials would work as well with all that color fighting for your attention. Trust me, kids... black and white is for the better.

Great stuff!

I love Romero and I am looking forward to your series. Excellent work. I like the black and white and the story approach is excellent.

I look forward to more of your work Robert and Tony

Regards,
Paul Nunes

Good to have you aboard.

Mr. Kirkman and Mr. Moore,

I just wanted to tell you how excited I am to have discovered "The Walking Dead," and the seriousness and scope which you are clearly dedicating to it.

I am a long-time fan of the Zombie genre, particularly the Romero films (especially "Dawn of the Dead") and Richard Matheson's "I Am Legend." Most of its excursions into comics, however, have been disappointing, even if only because they seem to mostly be mini-series and to focus solely on the "blood and guts" aspects.

As pleased as I was with "Walking Dead" #1, I became even "more" excited when I got to the end and read Robert's "mission statement," about how this is intended as a long-term comic series, and that it will focus more on the "real" issues if such a nightmare

were ever to actually occur: How will society adapt? WILL society adapt? How does one go about "living" in such an environment?

Again, I simply wanted to thank you for the particular venture, and to assure that I, too, will be along for the long haul!

Looking forward to issues #2 and #200!

Sincerely,
Christopher Andrews

It's good to see that so many people out there in the world really wanted to see a book like this the way that I did. I think comics are the perfect medium for the zombie genre. Aside from television (and that would take too long) there really isn't another medium that can devote the time to following the story through to the end. It's nice not having to do a two hour story and then move on.

Guys,

So, I'm in the comic store yesterday, making my semi-monthly trek for the few titles, which I buy regularly. Generally, I head right to the shelf where the one or two books I read are, grab them, and then walk slowly through everything else in the vain hope that something worthwhile will catch my eye.

"The Walking Dead" title grabs me. I pick it up. Slick cover, nice image. What struck me first was the "lone gunslinger" motif you used. "Wait," says I... "There's a picture of a guy with a gun... there's clearly zombies, as we see them reflected in the window... but he's not blasting their brains out in a technicolour splatterfest... Interesting..."

Needless to say, I picked it up, ran home with it, and (metaphorically speaking) devoured every frame of it. I must ask, are you guys familiar with the adventure roleplaying game "All Flesh Must Be Eaten?" It's a game of zombie-survival-horror. Here's where you grabbed me... for the past year+ I've been writing a supplement for this game, titled "One of the Living." In it, I went over ideas and themes very much like where you're going with your book. The idea behind OOL was to show players the psychological, and emotional effects of living in a world overrun by the undead. Not just more crap about blowing the hell out of zombies. But what would it really be like to live in such an awful world?

It looks very much like you guys are covering similar ground in your stories. Nice to see, honestly. I've always felt that the zombie film was so much _more_ than just dead guys eating live guys. The breakdown of society, the vanishing of all social classes... interesting stuff...

Anyway, I could go on like this forever (heck, that book's probably going to top out somewhere around 200 pages of this stuff). Suffice to say, your comic is tremendous. I'm going to write my editor directly, and see if I can get a reference to "The Walking Dead" in it. Hopefully help you sell a couple more comics.

Good stuff! Can't wait to see more!
-Ben

Never heard of that game but we would be honored to be mentioned in the supplement you're writing. Glad you like what we're doing. As seen in this issue there will of course be some of that splattery gore stuff but it is definitely secondary to watching grown men cry. That's where the money is.

Dear Robert Kirkman:

I just finished issue 1 of Walking Dead, eagerly awaiting the second issue!

I was just wondering if some of the statements made in the comic were commentary on a racist south?

Example, the extended explanation that the cop, Rick Grimes, gives his rescuers, Morgan Jones and Duane, concerning the implications that their temporary residence in his neighbor's house. It seemed like a rather lengthy explanation on how it's OK for them to stay there as long as they "don't put up a fight" when the rightful owners come along. Furthermore, the idea that Morgan and Duane are originally from another neighborhood that was not as "safe" -- did that imply that they came from a segregated neighborhood where perhaps security is not as high?

Also, the lending of the cop car. Grimes takes the better car for himself, leaving the father and son with the less quality car: Grimes: "You take that one on the left. It doesn't run as good as the one I'm taking but it'll run better than than the hatchback that you're driving." "If I'm going to make it all the way to Atlanta I'm gong to need the newer one." Morgan: :Wait...What?" Grimes: "You'll be safer in one of these things if you need to go anywhere"

Morgan: "but I--"

Grimes: "When things get back to normal... you'll have to give it back.. so try not to bang it up or put too many miles on it."

I mean, I understand Grimes is intending to drive all the way to Atlanta but something about his untrusting attitude toward Morgan just planted the idea that perhaps there was racial tension present. I mean, having to remind the man that he'll have to "give it back" -- is that not common knowledge and a rather patronizing reminder for a fully capable man?

Anyway, I was just wondering if those were the kinds of thoughts that you were considering when writing the script -- trying to deepen the feeling of the South through the short but important interaction between the cop and the black man.

Well, you don't need to write back if you are too busy (totally understandable what with all the projects you are working on!) but yeah, really, I was arguing with Nate about this and he totally thought my analysis was seeing more than was actually there. Just wanted to ask the creator to make sure! =)

Chrissy

Yes, you are seeing things that aren't there. It was rather unusual for a cop to give ANY man a squad car so Rick was just explaining that he was just loaning it to Morgan so he would be safer. He was trying to HELP the guy. No racist commentary here... promise.

Dead Robert & Tony

What we liked: The girl with the bike: the element of human reaction this exchange offer us

readers. Which is only the best example we picked for the amazing human reactions consistent throughout. "It's just fuckin' beautiful" Excellent storytelling. Great art: from initial expression-

ism, gritty environmental realism, and the skillful greys are a perfect finish for the work.

What we didn't like: give us more time and a second issue, and we'll try to find something for you.

Praise: see above.

Gripes: There's only one book out.

Namecalling: "Puddle zombies."

We think you guys're doing great. Don't slack.

--Marshall Banana

Well, there's four issues out now, Mr. Banana... find anything yet? We'd love to hear about it.

Hello there!!!

My wife says that I'm crazy, because I like horror movies and stuff like that, and when she saw the first issue of walking dead on my hands she confirmed that I'm crazy... Let me tell you that this first issue of the Walking dead is awesome!!! But something that I don't understand is why the disaster always happen when someone is at the hospital and when he wakes up suddenly the world as he knows it, is gone!!! I know is more scary that way, and maybe you'll tell us why and how this happened... in the meantime i just can only guess it.. I like the main character is between candid and fearless (I guess because he is a cop), and the scene of the dead(?) lady near the bicycle is great!!! Something that keeps bothering me is: How is that the rural area still has electricity (at the police station sequence)? but maybe you're going to answer that the generator is still running until it runs out of fuel... anyway it would sound unreal, but hey! it's only a comic book!!!

I have another question: How many issues of this great comics are you going to give us?

Please keep the great job you're doing with this comic.

read'ya in the next issue.

Cuauhtemoc Vazquez

Electricity? Magic dude... It's magic. As far as the waking up in a hospital thing... it worked in 28 Days Later... I figured it'd work here! Ugh. We plan on doing as many issues as we can... we'll see how many that ends up being hopefully many years from now.

I just got my copy of Walking Dead #1 and all I have to say is.. oh my god.. finally someone got it right.

I have been with zombie comics since the early 90's and remember the incarnations they went thru. Deadworld was the first and then The Dead and others followed but most were mini series that had a beginning, middle and end and usually either served to gross out the readers and not get them engrossed into the story.

The Walking Dead is a completely different book, it gets you right involved with the characters and you care about what is going to happen to them. The only thing that I didn't like is that it was a taste.. I want MORE. Ah well I guess I gotta go back and read the issue again until #2 comes out. Keep up the good work guys yer doing great!

Sincerely Yours,
Thomas Riccardi

Well, you've got more now... and the issues just keep on coming. You should be a happy camper.

What's up, guys? Look, I just wanted to write you guys and tell you that you are doing excellent work. I have always been a huge fan of the zombie genre, ever since I first watched the George Romano "dead" trilogy. It's something that people have tried to reproduce over and over. You guys have done it better than anyone else. It has that feel to it. As far as comics go, there have been a few decent attempts, but not many. The DeadWorld comics were alright. But no one has ever come close to it like you. I have been a comic ready for over twenty years, and I look forward to your book. keep up the good work.

Nothing but praise
Arthur Marvin Jr.

Gonna have to check out this DeadWorld stuff...

Hey guys,

I wrote in after the last issue and saw you printed my email, that's great, Thanks! I see you had a question about the Arrow Comics reference I made. Arrow Comics published the DeadWorld series back in the early to mid 80's. DeadWorld is the classic Vince Locke illustrated Zombie comic (Arrow later to become Caliber Comics). So far you guys are giving the classic a run for its money. Anyway, issue #2 was just as fantastic as the first and again I am looking forward to issue #3. Keep up the solid work.

Tom Ales

Gonna have to check out this DeadWorld stuff...

Hey Guys,

I just finished reading the 2nd issue of The Walking Dead, and I think it ROCKS. It's so nice to see something different and engrossing than some of the other titles out there. You guys have one hell of a book on your hands and I anxiously await the next issue and the one after that.....etc.

Enaida

Gonna have to check out this DeadWorld stuff...

Hello,

I really like your comic...a lot. I wasn't quite sure (assumptions about another mindless horror comic; though beautiful, I was afraid it would lack substance) until I read your letter to the reader editorial deal.

I love zombies - dawn of the dead-style zombies. Well, not the zombies themselves. I'm a window dresser in a mall in Orange County. I hate zombies. I love the foil that zombies

b i e s

pro -
vide for those truly living and the social
commentary possible with use of zombie imagery. I just curated a zombie art show
and am planning to have another.

Sorry, that wasn't the point of this. I'm zealous.

I just really liked your comic is all.
-Amber

I really like getting letters from girls. Glad you like the book, keep readin' and I'll keep writin.' Excelsior!

Hi there,

I reeeeaally love your comic. Obviously, I'm a zombie movie/comic fan. But I think "the Walking Dead" is currently at the top of the list of zombie comics, in my opinion.

My only two critiques are:

A) The name. I already have two other comics from the past with the exact same title. But that's all right. At least I knew what I was getting into when I saw the book on the shelf for the first time. Anything with "dead" in the title grabs my attention. So maybe that was your purpose.

B) I agree that your comic should stay black and white. But I can't get over your comment about the zombies in "Dawn Of The Dead" looking cheesy because they were blue. Man oh man! That's my favorite movie of all-time, and I love the look of the zombies. Not that they're particularly realistic (like in the sequel, "Day Of The Dead"). But to me, they define what horror movie "zombies" should look like. They look.... cool.

But besides that, when it comes to comics, I enjoy the stark detail in the line work that's often over-shadowed, or covered up, by coloring. So I applaud you for keeping your book colorless. And I hope it stays that way.

Now that the only two negatives are out of the way, I'll go ahead and tell you that you have succeeded in telling a story, thus far. As opposed to just gorey, cheap thrills that these sort of comics are usually based around. I love the gore too. But I think that proper story-telling will keep other readers interested, and not just us zombie-obsessed folks.

Speaking of which, I've seen a number of zombie books get cancelled pretty quickly. I sincerely hope that doesn't happen here. I'll do all I can to keep it afloat. Of course, the extent of my comic publishing powers is simply to buy religiously and tell my friends about it. So that's what I'll do.

One thing I could see happening is some sort of movie adaptation, what with the popularity of zombie flicks (Resident Evil, House Of The Dead, Dawn Of The Dead remake) rising. The silver screen would probably take kindly to a well thought out story like yours.

I guess that's it. Oh yeah, what sort of music do you listen to? I'm in a couple of punk bands (Down By Law and Pseudo Heroes). Don't know if you're interested in that kind of stuff. But if so, let me know and I'll send a cd or two your way. One of the albums actually has a parody of a "Dawn of the Dead" movie poster as the cover.

Seeya,
Sam

PS Could you let me know if you plan on putting this in the letters column?

A) Damn... really? Oops. Oh, well... too late now.

B) The zombies in Dawn of the Dead look bad... I mean... c'mon! The movie itself if amazing, make no mistake... and the gore effects at the end look good too, but that blue make-up looks AWFUL!

Free CD = free stuff... free stuff is always good. We've got a P.O. Box for a reason... lord knows nobody hand writes letters anymore.

PS I plan on putting this in the letters column.

First of all, I really enjoy this comic, the art is great and the story is awesome so far. The Romero style is apparent in your comic so far. Very cool. There is nothing like a zombie story that is more about the people and the situations they are stuck in than the zombies. I also think it is cool that the zombies are slow. Somehow I find it hard to believe that a rotting corpse would be able to run like Forrest Gump on speed.

Have you checked out www.homepageofthedead.com yet? It is a site dedicated to the Romero movies. A lot of us on the forums have been following your book (in fact, I found out about it from another forum member and then saw it in my local comic shop a few weeks later). You may like some of the discussions that go on in the forums. Also, if you haven't already read them, read the Reign of the Dead books by Len Barnhart. The style Len writes with is also Romero-esque.

I have just one favor to ask. Please keep this comic going for years to come.

Thanks,
Adam B.

I've been to that site a few times. I should hit the boards a bit more often but I'm just so dang busy most of the time... what with writing these damn long-ass letters columns and stuff. And I too agree that fast zombies suck.

Dear Letter Hacks:

Ok, first, I must know - I read Walking Dead, Invincible and Tech Jacket and even SuperPatriot from Mr. Kirkman. In all these books, there are letters by "Chris Piers". Is this a real person? I am guessing it is Mr. Kirkman creating the questions he would like to answer with a pen name. Am I right?

Ok, second. This is the best horror book ever! EVER! It does need some more violence, but otherwise it is off the charts, as they say. This Rick guy is gonna be a badass one day, I just know it. And at the end of this issue (2) it looks like he will have a small army perhaps! Kill all the zombies! Kill them all!

Wow, Tony Moore is maybe the best artist in comics! He draws all these rotting guys and I showed my little sister and she was like, "ugh, yuck!" and I thought it was funny but then my Dad saw what I did and he totally sent me to my room. It was worth it! He will still let me get the comics, don't worry, but he doesn't want me to frighten my sister. But she kinda deserved it because she once burned all my Magic cards, believe it or not.

Questions:

- 1) Will any superheroes be in this book? I think it is in another universe but I'm not too sure.
- 2) Does Tony Moore draw real people that he knows as zombies? If I was his friend, I would MAKE HIM do that!
- 3) How many issues will this go? I hope MANY.
- 4) Will you print my pinup if it is good and I mailed it to you guys?
- 5) Will you make a Walking Dead website? Videogame? Movie???
- 5) Will there be any other monsters?

Thanks for the awesome comic. I hope you print my letter. I bet my friend ten bucks Image will print it. Please help me win!

You guys are better than Resident Evil. You made me wet my pants a little during the first issue (I was able to hold most of it though so keep it up, it's a SCARY book!)

Your fan,
Peter Camacho

No, sadly... Chris Piers is very real. Visit www.shortbusonline.com for some of the very funny work of mister Chris Piers... that guy is a hoot!

- 1) Absolutely no superheroes ever. This is a totally different universe.
- 2) He does it sometimes... though I've certainly not appeared as a zombie yet... which kinda pisses me off. James Sime of Isotope fame appears in this very issue.
- 3) Many is definitely the plan. Don't know how many... I'd like to do at least fifty but I'd love to go beyond that.
- 4) Maybe... but don't mail the original, mail a photocopy. No promises though.
- 5) Too early to tell.
- 5) Nope... just zombies... and trust me... that's MORE than enough.

Robert Kirkman,

Hello. My name is Justin Zimmerman, and I'm, amongst other things, a Film Prof at Denison University, an award-winning Ohio Arts Council backed social-documentarian, the owner of an option to a Stephen King short story, a reader of the Walking dead...and 26 years old. Obviously, I'm a busy guy.

And, as I sat down to write this, I realized that not once, not once in my whole entire life, have I ever written a letter to a comic book.

So feel special!

I love comics. I grew up reading comics, I've volunteered extensively - with mentally handicapped kids, with inner-city kids and with Appalachian kids - and they all love to read comics. Comics get kids to read! (Why this has never caught on with the paragons of modern education, I will never understand.) And I came to your writing the old fashioned way, through following the work of Erik Larsen.

I grew up with his comics, and the fact that he's still going strong, independently, is incredible. So I check in on his side-projects from time to time too - even when the little liberal in me is screaming: "America's Fighting Force? What the f@#\$ does that mean?" You know, fearing patriotic furor.

Instead - great dialogue, snappy plot, fun, homage and wit! You've got the good sense to work with distinctive artists of great caliber as well, which doesn't hurt. So, I've been checking up on you.

And then...there's the other fact. The fact that not many people know. Well maybe my girlfriend. And my parents. ANYWAY...I love zombies. Love 'em. This fits in nicely with film theory (and there are times when I use comics to explain visual principles of film, so it's all coming together) which I'm not sure you're familiar with, so I'll get it out there.

The abject. The idea that something in you or of you becomes alien to you. Ray Bradbury writes about a mother's fear of her unborn child in a short story. She thinks it's going to kill her. Or blood. What's inside doesn't belong out. Or your grandma, who you loved dearly, until she passed away. So she's gone, but this physical shell, what you've always come to understand IS your grandma, remains. So, what if grandma's body moves? That's horror, and that's the abject.

The Walking Dead is great fun. The art is perfect, and while I wasn't sure how the gray tones meshed with the story in Noble Causes, it really works wonders here. The set-up is simple, effective and very, very exciting. A good start.

The one thing I find weak from moment to moment is certain snippets of dialogue, which were perhaps more pronounced because of your obvious talent for reigning in your characters in Invincible and Fighting Force. The frequent repetition of "What the hell?" The fact that the Father and Son were going out of there way to avoid the attention of the zombies - while there was a lit fire in the background. The fact that there might not be enough shells in an entire police station for two people. And on page 16, where "here" is used prominently in 4 sentences in 4 panels, really slowing down the exchange.

It seems you've got the beginning of a powerful, almost personal story in the works, and if you're taking suggestions, I'd say only this...you don't need to force it. You ducked any kind of explanation about where the zombies came from - hey, I don't mind - and you, with Tony Moore, build incredible suspense, tension and feeling in some of the most silent passages, or in the moment where Rick Grimes can't decide whether he should smile or not. Great stuff!

And hey, if you're NOT taking suggestions, I'll let you in on a little secret - I'm putting together a little story of my own, so you'll be invited to share your thoughts later, should you have the time.

Well, this is why I don't write letters to comics. I'm off to film for my newest doc this weekend, so I'll wrap this up. Info about my work is available at www.brickerdownt.com. I certainly look forward to seeing what you come up with next in the Walking Dead. And congratulations on your rave review in Entertainment Weekly. I remember when they wrote up the Authority, and great things happened.

Good luck, and thanks.

Justin Choma Zimmerman

Will someone explain to me how zombies could see smoke coming from a chimney at night? I mean... really? There is NO WAY that would draw zombies to someone. Anyway... glad you like the book.

With that I think I'll wrap up this edition of The Walking Dead letters column. We'll be back with more next month... I hope you join us then. Be sure to write those letters kids.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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Sales are up, reviews are good, the books moving along close to on schedule, and it's looking fantastic. Life is good. Issue five... man, it seems like just yesterday when we started working on this book, it really is true what they say about time flying. I hope you liked this issue, I think it's had the most action of any issue so far. It was certainly a lot of fun to write. If you didn't like it... there should eventually be a lot more so hopefully we'll make up for it at some point in the future.

Mail time!

This comic book goes far and beyond what I expected. I am a huge zombie fan. I collect anything that has Dead or Zombie in its title. When I read from a website about this comic book I already knew I was going to own it.

To tell you the truth, even if this comic sucked I would still continue to buy it. But of course this comic is a lot of things but definitely one of those things is that it does not suck. It is amazing.... This might sound strange, but I was hoping that Rick wouldn't find his family, and that the story wouldn't introduce them until later in the story. I like the feeling of desolation. But it is interesting that the survivors have a small community that appears will grow and live together.

Please add sad stuff, kill some people off...I need some violence! And we need an origin, don't go Romero on us!

-Alfred

Rick finding his family was all part of the story, trust me... this book would suck if it was Rick going from town to town meeting new people every issue while he looked for his family. I'm trying to do things a little different here... at least... for the most part.

I'm getting that feeling again. It's that feeling I get when I'm super excited by a title. Take a great artist who doesn't seem to be afraid of anything (the man can draw despair!) and a writer who grabs you so hard it doesn't matter what he writes because it's so damn entertaining and I get excited. I'm in for the long hall.

Wayne

Good to have you. We plan on being here for a while.

Hello Mr. Kirkman,

It may sound strange, but I am in heaven reading "The Walking Dead"! Being a fan of zombie films for close to twenty years, this is the closest thing to a "Romero" film, which are clearly the pinnacle of the genre, I have seen. More so, this isn't a cheap copy but an evolution of what George Romero did. This is truly the next step!

Zombie films are great, but to finally get an ongoing epic story of a man, and his family, as they fight to live in this crazy world, is wonderful. This is what a zombie story should be. The world at large has always been the most interesting concept to me in zombie stories. How would different people deal with the situation? Where would the survivors go? What type of adventures would the people have?

It seems you are prepared to answer many of these questions, and so much more!

If the first three issues are an indication of the quality we can expect throughout the run of "The Walking Dead" this series will be special. If the characterization and stories maintain their present level of creativity, then this will fast become my favorite monthly comic!

Thank you very much for your creation Mr. Kirkman, and a hearty thank you to Mr. Moore as well for lending the pictures to your words!

Best regards,
Chris Delloiacono

This thing was pitched as the zombie movie that never ends. I always wanted to know what happened to those people at the end of all those movies, this is me seeing what would happen if someone had the opportunity to follow the story out until the end instead of showing a ninety minute section of it. Stick around... I think it will only get better.

Robert and Tony,

Well, issue three was awesome. I liked the focus on the personal lives of the characters and as the cast grows I become more invested in the story. Tony Moore's art get more expressive every issue.

I was introduced to The Walking Dead, along with Invincible and Brit through the letters column in Savage Dragon. I think that title does a great job of creating a community of readers with its letter column and a story that month to month entertains and pretty much stands alone. I see this same community being formed with The Walking Dead. The story has been fun so far and I'm excited for the next issue.

By the way I heard Black and White is the new color!
Cody Shelton

"Black and white is the new color" you, Cody, are a frickin' genius!! I'll be using that in the future.

Dear Rob and Tony,

I wanted to drop you a line to tell you that I am loving what you are doing with The Walking Dead. Everything is great: from the powerful scene with Rick and the female zombie in issue #1, to the zombies closing in on Rick in issue #2 to the incredibly true-to-life moment with Rick and Shane observing the zombie in the woods in issue #3 (hell, I know that if I found a zombie munching on a deer, I'd certainly not kill the thing straight away). I'm so glad that I decided to do my usual random read (I work in a comic shop and when I have spare time on my hands, read something completely random) with this comic. I know buy Capes, own Brit and will shortly buy the Invincible trade. So keep up the excellent work, guys, and I'll keep recommending you to customers!

Nicholas Akrivos

Glad you like the book, Nicholas. With pre-orders on the rise, I can't help but think our continued success is due in part to people just like you.

Hi Guys,

You guys have made it onto my monthly comic shop pull list! I just finished reading THE WALKING DEAD 1-3 in one sitting and all I can say is this is the book I've been waiting a long time being a big fan of Zombie films and literature. I like how Rob is setting the story up slowly (no need to rush, I'm in this for the long haul!) and Tony's B/W art really works for a book like this, it really adds to the unsettling feeling of a world overrun by hordes of zombies.

I do have a question about issue one...is the little boy Rick meets after he wakes up named after the late, great Duane Jones from "Night Of The Living Dead"?

Wow! A letter that DIDN'T bring up 28 Days Later!!!!

John L. Parduba

Yeah, Duane Jones was my way of tipping the hat to George Romero and his fantastic film trilogy. That man is a GOD here at The Walking

Dead central. We actually bow to Pittsburgh every day at noon, we've got cute little rugs and everything.

DEAR "SUPPLIERS",

Less than one year ago, I visited a comic store, against my wishes, for the first time in my life as a 30 year old female who had never considered for a second the world of comic books. As I surveyed the store, wondering what kind of strange individuals must buy these comics on a regular basis, I saw a cover picture that caught my eye. Not sure why, but I was immediately obsessed and the ever so sweet Marc Bryant at Comixchange here in Knoxville, TN gave me Magic Pickle #3 for free...MY FIRST COMIC! In retrospect, maybe he wasn't being sweet, just saavy...kind of like a crack dealer giving a 16 year old a free sample, knowing that "they'll be back"! Well, almost a year later, with one comic box full and working on my 2nd box now, I am embarking on another "first"...my first letter ever to a comic. I just have to tell you how much it means to me: the work, the detail, the sheer power and emotion and the level of excellence that you both have put into the Walking Dead. I genuinely care about these characters, and for the first time, feel that color would have taken away from the feeling and presentation of this title. It is currently the comic I most look forward to each month and for that I thank you. I just picked up Cloudfall and Invincible back issues also and enjoyed the hell out of Capes. LOOK WHAT I'VE BECOME! (And I have my local crack dealers, oops, I mean comic retailers, Marc and Bill to thank for that.)

Lesley Taylor
Knoxville, TN

p.s. Keep up the excellent work boys, and if you ever stop making the Walking Dead, I'll cry...I'm a girl, I can do that to get what I want ya' know?!

Now that we have you we'll never let go. Your life belongs to us now, Lesley.

Robert and Tony,
Let me just get this out of the way. This is the first time I have ever written into a letters column. The sad part is the reason behind this letter. Yeah I love the book and all that shit that makes you feel warm and bloody, but shit man some of the people that write in to you really need to fucking get past their discrimination of black and white books. It is just an absence of color not an absence of talent or a great story. They need to go buy some crayons or something. As for the similarities to 28 Days Later, I say so fucking what. A guy wakes up in a hospital and there are zombies. End of similarities. I have been reading your shit ever since Battle Pope, as an Atheist who is totally devoid of any and all morals, I fell in love with your work. But after reading Battle Pope many times, too many times really, I almost started to view these god and Jesus characters in a more sympathetic light. I almost feel bad for not believing in them. Hell after reading The Walking Dead I may have to start worshipping Zombies. God speed to you man God speed! Love ya always.

Thomas Mackeiwc

Um... right back at you... Thomas. If the lack of color is keeping people from buying this book, that's really unfortunate. With Manga, and Sin City, and all the BILLIONS of quality black and white titles out there (like Battle Pope) it's a shame that people have to miss out on that. It's really their loss. Because... you know... black and white is the new color.

Dear Storyteller of Warm Fuzzy Tales,
Man, finding a copy of Walking Dead is not easy these days! It took me forever to round up a copy of #2. So I made sure I got Walking Dead #3 nice and early. It looks like axe sales have risen in the Image Comics Universe Country Store. Lori is my favorite character so please put her in as many harrowing situations as possible! Thanks.

Brendan Walsh

Yeah, a lot of people have been having trouble finding issue 2. It's historically the most under printed issue of any books run and it was no different for us. The Walking Dead #2 received so many advanced reorders from retailers that it was sold out at the publisher level before it even hit the shelves. Thankfully, there should be a second printing out in stores sometime before this issue hits, so those of you that are sitting there with a hole in your run can fill that gap in pretty easily. Or, y'know... you could buy the TPB this April.

Hunters and gatherers,

I've thoroughly enjoyed The Walking Dead. It's been a good long time since there has been a decent zombie comic on the racks, Deadworld (RIP Caliber Press) notwithstanding as it's not a typical zombie title. I love the art, the pacing and the learn-as-you-read focus of the script. I've added the book to my regular list of reading material and hope it catches on to others as well. Good luck, guys.

Also, I hope you all have your copies of the Zombie Survival Guide from Three Rivers Press and by Max Brooks. It's pretty descriptive of the bonuses and detriments to fighting and avoiding the dead that walk.

I hope you've seen it, read it and passed it

on,
since you never know
when you might need the knowledge. Fight on.

Jon Johnson (Sir)

I've got a copy of the Zombie Survival Guide, it was a Christmas gift. I haven't had time to read it yet... but I plan to get to it as soon as I run out of material for this book...

Dear Messrs Kirkman and Moore,

I purchased the first issue of the Walking Dead knowing nothing about it - really because I'm devoted to the Zombie genre, and compelled to sample everything in it. I quite enjoyed the artwork very much, I hadn't seen anything by Mr. Moore previously, but I'll be sure to keep an eye out for his work in the future.

I was disappointed, though, with the extremely slow pace and obvious story devices. The story, such as it was, consisted mostly of the main character wandering around a ruined city (lovingly depicted though it was) and then having the backstory explained to him. More disconcerting, though, was Rick's physical state throughout the story. He'd presumably been in the coma for well over a month, and while he spends a few panels leaning on walls, he's able to run around and fight for his life incredibly quickly. Then there's the whole question of who was watering him after the hospital was abandoned - the I.V. bag even seemed half-full. It ended well, though, with a clear goal being set for the character.

Despite my reservations, I decided to pick up the second issues, so I could get a sense of where the story was headed. Again, the book was fraught with pacing problems. In a twenty-two page book, there were only three real events: 1. He gets a horse. 2. He arrives in Atlanta, and is attacked. 3. A stranger leads him to his family. The length seemed padded out, with a rather odd speech dropped in to presumably strengthen the audience's understanding of Rick's bond with his family. The speech seems false, though, because the audience naturally assumes that a father loves his family - and the story wasn't anything we haven't heard dozens of times before.

I was also bothered by the continuing lack of logic and continuity errors - maybe Rick isn't supposed to be the smartest man in the world, but why would he walk into a strange house without a gun ready? The presumable lack of strength he should be suffering from kept bothering me as well, with him running, riding, and fighting with ease, despite his presumable lack of health. Then there's the big one - if the government made some effort to protect the city, where is the evidence of it? The blockaded roads, the army vehicles - piles of corpses by the side of the road? Then, by the end of the issue, Rick had already found his family - while it's always nice to get a happy ending, the search really didn't seem like much trouble, and by finishing the issue with the happy family reunion, you've got something that feels like a definite ending. What's the impetus for the average reader to go out and by the next issue?

I haven't decided yet whether I'll continue reading the book, I just wanted to drop you this note to suggest a few things that might be improved in the future. Might I ask - is there an editor working on the book? I didn't see one on the credits page, and it seems like the problems I'm pointing out (pacing, logic) are normally the kind of thing a skilled script editor would be able to handle.

Good luck with the series,

Daniel Weissenberger

P.S. - I wouldn't be too mad at 28 Days Later (A film I did NOT love) were I you - after all, they stole their opening from 'Day of The Triffids'

Yeah, I'd never heard of "Day of the Triffids" until people started writing in about it. I'm going to have to pick that up. As far as Rick's lack of strength (or lack of lack) there comes a time with accuracy versus entertainment value comes into play. Rick would have had a catheter in his urethra that couldn't be removed without medical assistance, but rather than deal with that and spend pages explaining how he got it out... I just ignored it. Is it inaccurate? Yep. Who's to say how much time passed between panels in those first few pages of issue 1? Rick could have sat there by his be for days, moving his legs around and trying to build up the strength to walk... I could have shown that... but that would have sucked. So instead I had him stumbling around and falling over... figuring that would be enough. As far as the IV thing goes... anyone with half a brain knows that that little bag lasts at least six months. They developed that technology for coma patients in the sixties. You'll notice the tank in issue 4, the reason that we

didn't see that stuff in issue 2 is that he didn't get far enough into the city. About Rick finding his family? I suck. It's a simple as that. Next letter.

Tony and Robert,

I really liked issue 3. I love that this book is by just two guys. I think you're doing a great job keeping the quality and consistency on the title high.

Tony's art is just absolutely amazing. His cover stood out, great use of negative space. But his pages are just fantastic. I'm really a fan of the black and white art because it lets you see his detailed work.

LETTER HACKS

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I realize I'm starting to sound like a broken record but as I type this I just found out today that our sales for issue 7 shot up another 2000 copies. That's just unheard of in today's market, especially for a black and white book... so thanks for the continued support people. We really appreciate it.

Speaking of appreciating I'd like to take this time to thank Cliff Rathburn for coming in at the last minute and pitching in on the gray tones for this issue. Thanks Cliff... you did a swell job!!

Now, onto the mail

Misters Moore and Kirkman,

On a Wednesday at the Isotope I'm always busy as fucking hell, I spend every minute of my day entertaining a big group of crazy-cool customers, talking comics, and (of course) pimping comic books. Don't get me wrong, Wednesdays are my favorite day of the week, I really love the high energy crowd and the manic party atmosphere that we have every week, but I rarely get a chance to check out the latest wares until the doors are locked and the lights are off.

But with WALKING DEAD #4 in the store you know I had to take some time out of my day to read that sucker, and good lord can you imagine my shock to see my dead and rotting self laying there in a big pile of bodies?!? Now I certainly consider it quite an honor to be dead in one of my favorite books and you know it absolutely made my day! You guys are just too good to me.

So I thought I'd also take a little more time out of my Wednesday to say thanks for the great surprise... and for making such a kick ass comic book. Keep up the terrific work!

James Sime
Isotope - the comic book lounge
San Francisco
<http://www.isotopecomics.com>

James Sime ladies and gentlemen! James, you were one of the first people I spotted that were talking this book up and I can't help but think you've had a hand in its success. So to thank you... I got Tony to draw you all dead and rotting. It was his idea to have your guts all hanging out though... so thank him for that. Keep up the good work, man... it's good to know that people are out there busting their ass to sell these things

Hey guys,

Been reading the series since the 3rd issue... found #1 so all I'm missing is #2. At any rate I don't buy many single issues of anything, but you've pulled off a very convincing tale about zombies.

This is great.
Can't wait for the trades. Well, everything that can

be said has already been said, so I'll just end with keep up the good work!

B. Alex Thompson

You'll be glad to know that a second printing of issue 2 should have hit shelves sometime around issue 5 making it to stores. A lot of people were complaining about missing issue 2. If you missed out on the second printing the TPB should be out about a month after this issue.

I'm going to give you another reason why The Walking Dead is one of the best books on the market now, it's going to bring in new comic readers.

2004 is going to be a HUGE year for zombie fans. The Dawn of the Dead remake and the Resident Evil Sequel will not only thrill fans of this unique horror creation, but we will see much new blood brought into the zombie loving fold. This is why the whole of the comic community should get behind The Walking Dead. An amazingly accessible book with gruesome black and white pencils that will get anyone who appreciates cinematic storytelling coming back for more, this book has it all!

Hat's off to you taking the time to kill potential fanboy Internet backlash with your explanation of the price of the upcoming trade paperback. The catch 22 situation with those who buy trades only is definitely a hot spot in comic circles of late, and it's good to see a creator giving his two cents on this subject. I find myself on both sides of the issue often but I tend to buy creator owned books monthly as oppose to trades. Your book has entered into my exclusive list of comics that I buy in trade as well as monthly now because after reading Letter Hacks I know you are creators who deserve as much as I can give. The real reason is that I don't want to let my non-comic reading friends borrow my issues when I make my pitch for them to pick up this series...and join the growing ranks of comic book fandom.

P.S. Have you read Max Brook's "The Zombie Survival Guide"?

- Nick Borelli,

I've got a copy of the survival guide, but haven't read it yet, someday though. Nothing would make me happier than knowing I got just ONE guy to starting reading comics because of his (or her) love of Zombie flicks. Let's hope you're right... this industry could use a few more people addicted to these thin little picture books.

Hey guys-

I've never written to a comic book before, but after reading the letter column to issue 4, I realized you guys are missing an essential part of the typical letter column. So, here goes...

"Man, I hate this book! You guys suck! You're ruining Rick's life, not to mention Lori's! I can't believe Image is allowing you guys to breathe, let alone publish! Eat \$*#\$ and die, mother#)^#@&^s!"

Ok, now that you've gotten a negative letter, everything'll work out fine!

Seriously, love the book! I'm a Manager of a comic book store (Golden Apple II in Northridge) and I have been promoting your book shamelessly since #1! Just wondering if you guys ever make it to Southern Cali? If so, I would LOVE to have you at my shop for a signing! Maybe the San Diego Con (or Wizard's Long Beach shin-dig in March)?

Well, keep up the good work and, hey, one other thing:

If Image ever asks you to do a variant cover (or a holofoil, or a red foil, or a...well, you get the picture), use that ax Rick carries around and start chopping!

Sincerely,

Warren Jaycox

I have variants, if I can help it... I hope to never do a book that has variant covers. It just bugs me having different looking copies of the SAME book... but that's just me. So no worries on the variant cover thing. If I'm ever in California again, I'll look you up. I'd personally love to do a signing. Might even drag Tony along if he behaves. Keep in touch, and thanks for the support. Oh, and I printed a negative letter in issue 5, so your email really just hurts my feelings, asshole.

Robert & Tony,

I just had the pure enjoyment of reading Walking Dead 1-3(#4 is waiting in my hold box at the comic store). I don't think there has been a better comic in this genre in a long time. There have been quite a few "horror" comics coming out in the last two years, but nothing this well written or this well drawn. This is the best thing Image has released since Midnight Nation. In a way, it makes me nostalgic for the days when Vince Locke was doing Dead World, it gives me that excited(I feel like I'm fourteen again) feeling every time a new issue comes out. Do you remember Dead World? I hope I'm reading this comic for a long, long time! Keep up the great work and I'll keep telling my customers at the comic store that they need this comic more than food, air, & water

Thanks for not letting a zombie fan down.

David Richardson

I think I'm going to start running a FAQ section at the top of every letters column that says "Dead World and Max Brooks Zombie Survival Guide have been purchased thanks to recommendations in letter hacks, but the creators have yet to find time to read them." I got some Dead World stuff on Ebay and I'll try to get to it soon. It's just... I've got issues of X-men to read, people!!

Hi

Wow is all I can say about The Walking Dead. This is one of the best comics out there. Robert catches the mood of the great Zombie movies perfectly. I'm really waiting to see the confrontation between Rick and Shane me thinks one of the Walking Dead.

Great Stuff Great Job
Paul Abblitt

What makes you think there's a confrontation coming up between Shane and Rick? I'll tell you right now .. NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN. Those guys are FRIENDS. Haven't you been paying attention?

My friend Mike turned me on to your book and boy am I glad he did. It's been a good 5 years since I have found myself enthralled with a title enough that I actually visit my local comic store and nag them if the next issue is in yet. I just got finished reading number 4 and you have treated the genre of zombie stories better than any one else I have seen in print. I have enjoyed how the story has evolved and that you have left the reader in the dark as to the origins of the zombie plague just as the main character Rick is.

As a fan of the Romero trilogy, I always felt that the zombies were incidental to the story and the real power of the tale was how ordinary people react to mortal danger and the collapse of society as they know it. I'm very interested to see how the band of survivors at the camp react when they realize that help isn't coming, and that traditional morality has no role in the world that they find themselves in.

Keep up the good work.

p.s. I love the nod to Duane Jones (the name of the actor who played Ben in the original Night of the Living Dead, may he rest in peace.) in issue #1, keep the fan boy references coming!

Eric R. Weiss

Heh... fan boy references will be slipped in as much as I can. I'm trying to keep you guys happy. I'm glad you like my approach Eric. I really respect zombie horror as a genre and I'm just out to do the most interesting tale I can no matter what. I hope most of you didn't notice but this issue has NO zombies in it. That's going to happen from time to time (not too often though, so don't worry). "The Walking Dead" does NOT refer to the zombies in this book.

Walking

Hey man this is a piece of great work you got here. Man I just can't say how much I like this story (I like this story!) Well I guess you guys get that a lot. Here's my scoreboard:

Art 10.0
Plot 10.0
Color 10.0

You scored 100.0 points (its supposed to be 30.0pts but I like this book.) One question: How about making toys of your characters? Try asking Todd Mcfarlane.

Drayco

Whoa!! We got a 10 for color and there ISN'T ANY!! We kick ASS!!! Oh, and Todd... you listening? I'm ready for toys when you are!

Dudes I read your letter at the end of number 1. I whole heartedly agree, thank you for this
Please make more

Crazyphysicist

We'll try, we're no Doritos but I'll see what we can do.

Dear Robert & Tony—

I just got issue #4 a couple of days ago, and have probably read it seven or eight times since.

I have to say, with this issue your title has gone from being a comic I'm thrilled reading, as something bursting with promise, to a title that is really starting to deliver on that promise.

And when it gets to showing your cards in a story, delivering on the promise you've made when you say, "Come here, I have a story to tell," that's usually when things get disappointing...

I almost don't know where to start... On the zombie side, I love the addition to the lore (which you thankfully seem to be following pretty closely according to the Philadelphia model) this issue brings. I, myself, have wondered what keeps zombies from attacking each other willy-nilly, unerringly honing in on the living. I found your answer very satisfying, but I found your use of it fucking stunning. The half-splash of the zombies jammed up against the tank was thrilling, and getting to move among a throng of the undead with our heroes, undetected, was all the things you want from a horror experience: creepy, exciting, nerve-wracking. The thing is, those of us who love the zombies are very familiar with the tropes: flesh eating, the mob, artillery, infection and half-measures, the transfiguration of those closest to us into brainless monsters... all that. But that walk through zombie infested Atlanta felt like something I'd never seen before, and it was really exciting.

And that's secondary to what I'm enjoying most in *The Walking Dead*, which is the human drama — watching our heroes deal emotionally and practically to a world that's been overrun, hostile and desolate. A world which, I might add, is easier and easier to imagine coming to be with each passing year. I was very enthusiastic to read your manifesto about the title's intended goals. It put me in mind of some of my favorite Japanese comics, where the story unfolds slowly, accruing character as it goes, almost closer to the pace of life than a novel, even. I think you're succeeding quite well there, and I thank you for it.

I also think you're getting the mix of drama to action just right. Good job.

I have a technical question for Tony. Do you do your "coloring" with a computer? Or are you working the greys more traditionally, by hand and stuff?

Greyscale comics generally aren't my thing, I like stark black and white or lush colors. But I agree with you guys, black and white, in the more cinematic palette, is absolutely appropriate for this. Heightens it, in fact. Maybe because we associate black and white photography with an era before modern special effects, and of course contemporary films inform our take on visual entertainments across mediums. So, black and white equals more real, somehow. Just a little theory I'm working up, I don't know. Without question it's great for the compositions. Obviously you're changing my thinking about this comics-in-greys situation. I love your drawing style, by the way. I aspire to developing something similar. Great zombies, too

Oh, one last thing. Rick's family is alive. And he found 'em. I wasn't expecting that angle. Boy, how's about having something to lose, right? Great stuff. Issue #4's "terrible revelation" at the end is not about cars going over cliffs, nor our heroes surrounded (no, you gave us that with the peek at Issue #5's cover — dizzy with anticipation, here), but more devastating, in fact. The human drama. Fantastic.

Keep up the good work, sirs. Here's to a long, interesting run.

Thanks again,
Andrew Garcia-Price

Letters like these make it all worthwhile. We sit in our rooms all alone doing the best work we can, hoping people get it... and to find that you (and most people) are responding to this book so

favorably is really something special. I can't thank you (and guys like you) enough. You rock. Tony does the tones on the computer, it's all done in Photoshop

Dear *Walking Dead*:
I had to take a breather from watching USA Channel's true dramatic

stories *DC Sniper: 23 Days of Fear* and *The Perfect Husband: The Laci Peterson Story*, to read *The Walking Dead* #3! Tonight I went from dramatic reality of watching the above mentioned movies to reading a story that would make George Romero shiver in his boots! The grisly scene of seeing that dead man chomping down on a deer gave me the heebie

jeebies. Even though this comic book is done in black and white, the artwork is very realistic. The hatchet beheading left me speechless. This is the best horror comic book on the market today. I love the outdoorsy tone of the story and I will not be going out camping for a long time. What *Jaws* did for swimmers, this comic book does for people who love the woods and outdoors. It's time to stay in the house, turn on all the lights before reading this comic book again! A job well done! I am an Office Manager for a government political job (my real job) here in Sacramento, California and have actually seen Vice President Dick Cheney, shook hands with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and former Black Panther Bill Jennings. At times my own reality is surreal and it's nice to take a break from the political madness. Avoiding the media swarms, like CNN News trucks parked in front of our building during the Recall Gray Davis campaign and so on. I take my break from my own surreal reality and step into a world that is filled with horror and terror and the best way to do that is by reading your comic book! I give you a cordial bow and salute you for a comic book that is superior in everyway! I will be going to Moscow, Russia on vacation in April and I will be bringing your comic book with me, to re-read on the long flight over there.

Sincerely yours,
Paul Dale Roberts

There was a Black Panther before T'Challa? What haven't I heard of this?! Do I smell a no-prize? Glad you like the book, Paul.

Letter Hacks:

Dammit this series rocks. I really tensed up when they went into the city. The dialogue comes across very well between everyone, and the drama between Lori and Shane keeps getting better. Tony's art makes everything oh so juicy, I'm loving it. Thanks, and keep up the great work!

Sincerely,
Ryan Walsh

No more McDonald's slogans in letters please, Ryan. Unless it's "Food, Folks, and Fun." That one was the best. Anyone ever try to order the "Folks" and "Fun?" We should have sued those assholes

Hey I just wanted to take a minute to write and say what an excellent book y'all have. As of late there are a lot more horror comics on the rack and you guys have managed to put out one of the best. The story and the art are always great. The story is well developed as well as the characters, which is sometimes difficult in any zombie story, 'cause unlike other monsters zombies don't have any character traits like vampires and werewolves, they're kinda like a force of nature if you will. So you have to really invest in and like the characters to keep interested with the story, even though some characters are pretty much zombie food. Moving on to the art, Tony gives stark and vivid images that are gorgeous (please keep it black and white). The attention to detail on the zombies is hardcore and should make any horror fan happy. Overall you have one of the best books on the market not just in horror comics but comics in general.

Thanks and keep up the good work,
Matthew G.

Didn't you hear? Black and White is the new color! We're at the front of a craze wave that's going to be sweeping the world by storm. Black and White 4-ever!!

Dear LetterHacks,

Wow. Issue four was amazing. This continued quality just keeps elevating the overall book. But issue four was something special.

Tony's art has been complimented by myself and others many times but man, does he also know how to make a cover. Each cover to Walking Dead is brilliant and makes me want to rip open the book and figure out what scene I'm looking at. He creates tension simply with his composition and layout. For covers today, it's up there with 100 Bullets (Dave Johnson) and other books with good covers like Losers, Y the Last Man and Fables. Impressive as hell.

But what I liked most about this was the stink factor. Yeah. When Robert introduced the idea that zombies don't attack each other due to a rudimentary sense of smell, I was like, "Great!" Any explanation will do but it's never really covered as to why zombies don't attack one another. But it got better. You just knew that walking into the middle of the zombie-infested city was not Rick's best idea. At least not his most well-thought-out. And it was like a time bomb, waiting for the plan to fall apart. And sure enough, you ratcheted that tension up and had it all go to pieces at the worst possible time.

Good job.

It really blows my mind that you write light-hearted stuff like Tales of the Realm and Invincible and then turn around and put out some mature, tense, character-driven work like Walking Dead. Keep exploring that range, man.

Thanks for another terrific issue,
Chris Piers

Thanks for the kind words, Piers. This year... I'm sending you a Christmas card... with a little something extra.

Just wanted to compliment you on "The Walking Dead." It's the best comic I've ever read. No joke. Great work on the #4's cover. When is #5 coming out? The long wait has been a killer. Keep up the great work.

-Tristan

Issue 5 will be out... a month ago by the time you read this. Sorry I couldn't get back to you sooner. This printing schedule is a mess.

Kirkman,

About time someone decided to canonize zombie lore! All bodies of the recently deceased get up and kill - the people they kill get up and kill. They do not require food or sustenance; they are driven by hunger as an instinct. Moreover, they do not run, speak, or use weapons! I'm glad that others like the Romero zombie world. Nobody I know even knew there were two sequels to Night of the Living Dead. Dawn of the Dead is my favorite movie. Why didn't I know this book was out when it started?!? I just found issue #2 on the shelf at my local comic shop after reading about it some time ago on NEWSARAMA.

Following Romero's formula is a recipe for success. Night shows the horror.

Dawn of the Dead establishes how and who comes back. Day gives the facts about how they walk around (while keeping the exact cause a mystery - it's also good that Romero distanced himself from the whole Venus probe in the 90s remake). More important than the facts on zombies is the social commentary that basically shows that man is not better than those walking corpses outside, killing each other and fighting while we should be uniting. Zombies do not kill each other! Everybody go buy the new Day of the Dead 2 disc DVD and pick up Dawn as soon as it comes out.

Love the book. Our hero finding his family was great. It was so expected it became unexpected and therefore a pleasant surprise. Keep up the good work!

Now loyal fan,
Chris Pitts,

Glad you like the book Chris, thanks man. Can someone confirm this even-better-than-the-current-Dawn-DVD-release version of the movie that's coming out in October. I'm hearing 5 discs and to be honest... it's making my heart skip a beat. I'd rather not buy this one coming out in March if I don't have to.

Walking Dead staff,

Just wanted to say that I am really enjoying The Walking Dead. I hadn't bought a comic book in probably 5 years. I stopped in a store the other day just to browse. It was there that I saw The Walking Dead, Issue #1. Being a huge fan of Romero's zombie trilogy (esp. Dawn) as well as 28 Days and Zombi, I was curious. I gotta say, you guys have really done an excellent job with the book. I was able to find Issue 3 in another store. I've seen #'s 2 and 4 on Ebay. Looking forward to picking them up as well. Keep up the great work and story. Being a zombie fan myself, there are so few quality zombie products out there, be it movies, books, etc. I truly hope this is a long lasting series.

Thanks,
Dave

With sales figures what they are I can guarantee we'll be around for a while. Oh and Dave .. we almost went an ENTIRE letters column without mentioning 28 Days Later and then you had to go fuck that up. Thanks, man! At least it wasn't in reference to the opening scene of issue 1... that at least, is a step in the right direction.

And with that I bring another massive letters column to a close. Thanks for writing in, people. You know everyone here at The Walking Dead central loves you. Keep sending that email!!

See you next month.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

1997-1998

THE NAUGHTY DEAR
DO FUNK-IT-UP
P.B. BOE FROM
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 26

[illegible][illegible]

Speaking of which, we'll give them a hand and let Mathew & team return on the way out room on the corner. I've been a big fan of O'Quinn's ever since I sawed his work on my good kitchen in Tucson about three years ago. I've followed Charlie into a number of comedy troupes, notably the White Owlz from AllPawzLuv. The fellow went from "Whispering" and a couple more that I can't remember to his first major movie years back. I must've missed the last time I heard of his and the Owlz's (whichever) work, when I was among their 500th patron I read out earnings. Charlie is a hilarious comic and I consider his legging in Aspen to be his best. I can't wait to hear what he's next. *WJW*

Off Kallings is the (smug) first behind Burger, a look that I sense he's sharing with another Burger and shouting out to anyone you're watching. 2013 is not as good as the other, it's worse in being the best bad year. I find Off's being a good job and you can see how of his parties and how it has, actually, but that's the thing and that's the thing in 2013.

Unfortunately, it joins the long (and ever continuing) list of errors in the "Star Wars Series" category. I couldn't let that go. "Seeing galaxy ships on fire" looks a little strange, but I really didn't expect an actual "turnaround." Thanks for the continued support, guys.

1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 2680, 26

1998

I just want to let you know of your first book. I'm a reader. (Not something I read from and was given) mentioned in the other page with. The manuscript was published by you're 20 years old, is that you told that this book is going to be my second year (1999). (That's the book is really good, but I don't want that I want to be the top of the book, but this book is not better than I'd love. Because the author just finished. Stop. I hope you will, when something is just not done. I hope that you can with you can do more.

I still cannot keep anything like track. I just sit, mulling it over, and the growth, which started at about 1 1/2 just after adding those few seeds, increases, jumping off at times. Everything up to that point had been a

I've been a member of the United Way for as long as I can remember, and after reading your front-page ad in *The Morning News*, I immediately felt that it was my job to contribute \$5 to deal the aftermath of this and that that has, again, left the situation of this flood-ravaged and living in fear on the long term. The water took (had to be) someone's (young, elderly) and those I hope that you continue to make many more lives like this.

A See **First Significant Character Test** and **Test 2** is identical to **Test 1** and is identical to **Test 1**.

continued. Addressing the concerns of the public, the committee will continue to work closely with the public and the media.

PHOTOGRAPH
I missed your book, *Belonging*. It had to be my favorite thing, book or movie. I am one of the biggest fans of the glossy, cutting-edge industry leader. One of my very first gay gigs was on the set of *Callie's First Love*, which Mary McCormack, whom I met at that time, and I were very fortunate to work on for the show. I knew that I would be after it was back when I was 17 and was just starting out on the *Entertainment Weekly* set. I was a production assistant, and I was working with some of the best people in the industry. I was very lucky to have been on the set of *Callie's First Love*, and I was very lucky to have been on the set of *Callie's First Love*. I was very lucky to have been on the set of *Callie's First Love*, and I was very lucky to have been on the set of *Callie's First Love*.

Just down is another flag. This is another flag out of the pack. The story is to tell what the image says about the company's strategy and. There are a few things that you can do to make sure you are a big hit. First, make sure you are a big hit. Then, make sure you are a big hit.

John Barnes,
6880 1st [unintelligible] Street, West Hills and ZIP 00 Postal
Office

Letter from William, James Barrow: "Good to hear your response, James. I trust nothing too great thing about your work, you're a doctor. I'll see if I can't find out all sorts of things that you're doing I'm on the street. What is that chance [It's not your work, right?]"

I will always work to serve. The way has simply to find direction.

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1. If you have already 4 points on your profile, a big "X" will show how many more points you need to get. If the form is damaged, the key will not work. The "Total" will be explained on the answer page on and the questions are there. If all these items are OK, you are good.

2. My sporadic and limited job... and (perhaps) wouldn't grow any more. I had my very first job for about 10 years and remember that I started with a lot of hope from there. Honestly, I know that you'll happen. I'd like to make it all over the moon... and I think it's all yours.

100

1. *Why do you want to work for us?*

100

The above-mentioned journal lists that I had some things I really want, 44 in total. I just finished "turnoff" of TPO, and I just gotta say how much I love the world. I was wearing all these pants about how that turning down to "turnoff" I was being consumed in 28 Days Later. In my opinion that is what it stays because, within 28 Days Later, they actually said that that "you" is more than 28 days later to turn up. When I grow up for the first time I thought I was going to be a flying machine with that "turnoff" too good and too enough to make our way to every. This has become the same I always feel forward in flying every week. I think your going to be off and flying because all is better/better. I say that you are the only people who have ever really helped me for the rest of George's memory to me. I am in the learning field. I mean, I am my friend, who is a good friend to you, more like you and the future and I am. I am the dream/love my judgment, but that's all over a night and away. And I know my guys are busy so I will sign off for now. I look forward to your excitement and I know you are going to be a good one. Right??

100

And how about the 800 calling itself, and is buying. The more you know that just goes for the same for the good, and the amount you get the most of each is expected that they make the most. Please see the comments.

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I didn't take long, but I can say only that *The Writing Desk* is already my favorite book on the subject. There are a bunch of books that claim to make handwriting look like the work of a professional, but I can't think of one that has ever pulled the rug out. Thanks to the great book, I'm now proud of it a little more frequently. It's like a little green book you're carrying around in a daily bag. There's also the red one! It's so difficult to keep in your handwriting folder when you want to be productive about 700 pages or 10,000 words in 10 minutes.

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Workplace for people, not profits. www.100percent.org

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Finally, a personal anecdote. I know the writer and this story is fairly long and away from the city but what if the reader is looking for something that is happy, heartwarming and true. Then, it has and can mean a great meaning to a lot of people at the beginning. I think the writer often people themselves that people people, pleasure in going for her. And I'm guessing the readers will long for the same. And I hope that it goes really well for the first. These people are going to continue just like me a few more times. Before they really start to feel in the writer. I hope I just wrote the first few lines and you.

The entire jury had been present? I guess, because she happened to find judges in public places at the end. By the way, I put the timing and I had to be in a awful corner by myself. I would probably have been for an hour, if I was a long, fat, dangerous, human and being in the courtroom to see what could be a half of a cell with me and some confusion. (Page 114, sentence 10) And some confusion, like that one too.

1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 2680, 26

The silver lining is different, I guess, but I am not alone on the road. I'll be going back to work in two, three, four, or five days.

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Received 22 November 2005; accepted 12 January 2006

(A) *Adapted from an essay*
 (B) *Adapted from a newspaper*
 (C) *Adapted from a magazine*
 (D) *Adapted from a book*

The company's work
has led to the company
being a leader.

Along with the great work
I hope your long months give
the life some good stuff.

There, "Good Lord, that's me, that's me, that's me, I love the sound of my own name," I start to be annoying, and some people tell me to bring you down or interrupt or whatever. But know that a lot of people find your poem or philosophy pretty hot stuff, and it's something they've just wanted to discuss with you, about politics, language, they're not interrupting, and the usual fun, but not a disturbance.

1

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1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 2680, 26

I discovered during those times that I was put to shame in my bad times, and then came through at the end of those 90 days. It was a little better than the first, I also have to say that getting up every day and go into the classroom, they were perfect. I know that I did it and that I was going with the wind, and that was probably a great spirit. And that was about that. I know you will see something in your classroom, and in

Issue #6, must've caught his pants. 22 inches. Why bother to pull them 6" off to be "cheating" with the waistband? He is a cheat. People love that guy! That was a lovely mistake. I did love happy because that must feel so happy. Instead, unfortunately, reading your file is just as good. Book #1, Issue #1. It's still being done. Great, yes. Thanks to issue #6, maybe I can have to read about you enough that it helps your reading group. The book is about the people and the journey. I just wish that we could compare it to (2) The Last and the First, which is a book about the journey that makes you feel like you're in a great book.

What's up the good news
about it?

FIG. 10. Mean daily feeding rates (g dry wt./g dry wt./day) of *A. baileyi* fed on *A. baileyi*.

Finally, I don't have time to respond to all the e-mails I send back, but I answer everything and share a great number of my real thoughts, ideas and suggestions to help. So that's just going to have to be good enough.

[illegible]

I sat looking reading and wondering *The Making Good Will*. I have to tell you that you have gone just gutted yourself & the long last year. I am not sure of those readers who is in that with another reader, then, etc. In fact, I have right here from: I had seen you about those questions that making and thinking is the place where your arms are being brought in and then up. When you'll go and grab a book of your good friends and I hope you'll be happy that was talking to you in fact. I really felt you talking and thought, "What's that, Jerry, just a story?" I was sure I was not good. I had to be the first step in thinking and was the making of the Will and I thought that I might as well go for it. I was kind and with so many things inside head you were going to be thinking that money was an idea that would probably have long up again. But then the other I had to be that the making of William James from the book. I continued just look and occasionally surprised. The rest was good and the other, almost entire picture. But I had been that the would be a long story about a man wanting to be happy and when making them by one day. Because of my only one, but I picked up the book and told James if he didn't read the book. Long time ago, I am going to want money from him thought myself. When I thought of the book, I had to read. When James says in writing that I had read out your picture book. In fact, it showed me that you are willing to change things around in the book without knowing how a changed status you might affect the readers. I will tell you that this reader cannot do enough of it. I was turned from the book, appeared and was so full of you thinking that you had and get when. The characters are so that that is important with every one of them. The other is going to be thinking that I don't know how I can write a short story with so much power (more to go) to you. But that's not the main thing. They know that you have up with these ideas. The other will be coming, hanging over the book and perhaps, one picture (or two) will be. I have more than the 24 days later that someone will stand as I can't remember exactly that.

[illegible][illegible]

They said I was built a quarter turn my way. That's how
the world goes.

Source: *Author's calculations*.

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I had no question about it going over the wire. First, I had already to go over a road grade (coming off the overtake) that I had to take on Tuesday night. And then, I was able to pick up that last inch of First Street before I hit the wire. In fact, I did it.

It may seem all of the companies are focusing out on cost. Companies like Intel are looking outside looking for alternative ways to build their own around cost and performance.

I took something, I'm not sure, a typical gesture that I had picked up from someone else as I was sitting there, right? I was sitting down there and the body was uncomfortable in the position where the muscles and tendons were stretched. But that's all that I know about it. It's all of the interesting things that I've learned from my own experience, and I'm not sure if I can tell you more about it.

Why not attempt to saving the dead in the time just before passing? The fact that nothing is and the place of the dead for the rest of the year of the summer of 1902-03, and that the method, the "Museum" No. 1.

And, about that budget, we have set in the spring of 2000 \$B. . . any economic saving amounts to a price to do it. We're under the, or do the government enough of a forced entry in the market to determine the flow of the system?

I had also recognized that "limestone" was an essential soil for the well and good life. What if a positive body tissue and "limestone" is a significant growth spur to immortality. The positive and its deeper roots are, not only. The body continues to break down, releasing calcium is half of it. The source that, before the ground, with hard, more continuous grow than that ground. A lot of limestone, is group of farmers, such as, but from some reason, would be notified for "limestone" and limestone produced limestone.

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If you couldn't tell, I am LUCAS from the **WILKINS GANG**.
This is my kind of game, and there's games around the 4-fig
game zone.

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1000

A Jordan's (and all other) really have decreased. Compared to before, with a 20 foot model to Jordan. It's possible that all you would just select the section. So that's for the next part.

1999

They think it's an unusual thing to ask, proposed that *Beats Figs* is still in the fitting trend in the meeting, a few more, the work is great, looks a little good, they're planning, it's something you think, as I'm entering a month, how to the house of the garden, Robert O'Connell, I was a little concerned to put up *Beats Figs*. But I did, and I could not turn up to the first head not to mention, actually had not in the *Beats Figs*. The imagination is a gathering that has become just another with the leader in it is the ground to put up your work every month and has moved to your work.

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Welcome to issue 8. Things are running smoothly here. Numbers are STILL on the rise, word of mouth is spreading... and we just got nominated for an Eisner (did I mention that last month?). Things are good.

Before we dive into the letters I want to give a shout out to Charlie and Cliff, you guys have gone above and beyond this issue. This book is looking fantastic. I absolutely couldn't be happier with how it's turned out. Keep up the good work!

Now that we've got that out of the way... let's dive into these letters.

Hey gang. I like your new book, it's the best zombie comic to come along in a while. It's the best kind of zombie story, one that shows a very human aspect at it's core. I'd put it up there with some of the other best zombie books; Deadworld ish's 1 to 16, plus the accompanying short stories that went with it. The Night of the Living Dead movie adaptation, (by Fantico I think, who, unfortunately, don't seem to exist anymore,) plus their Night of the Living Dead: London sequel. Dark Horse's Zombie World: Winter's Dregs, Tree of Death, and a couple others they did. Plus others I can't recall offhand now... Resident Evil comics were kind off cool, but lacked length, and good dialogue. There were some cool blood & guts, but if your dialogue sucks then you're screwed. In fact the dialogue in Resident Evil (games in particular) sucked ass until the novels and movie came out. Here are my fave zombie flix:

Dead Alive(I know it's ridiculous, but it's the bloodiest movie ever!)

- Night of the living dead
- Dawn of the Dead
- Return of the Living Dead
- Night of the Living Dead (remake)
- Return of the Living Dead 3 (2 was a good story with good soundtrack/music, but stupid acting, whereas 3 had good acting, but shitty music. Go figure.)
- Day of the Dead
- Resident Evil (Although it's as much a bio-terror movie as a zombie movie.)
- Dawn of the Dead (remake)
- 28 Days Later (even though the zombies aren't dead)

I can only imagine how cool Resident Evil: Apocalypse

is
going to be. You
guys are

doing great. I shall keep pace with your book.

Later, Misfit.
Rochester, NY

P.S. I also dig the Evil Dead trilogy, even though they're not exactly zombie flix. And, hopfully, it won't always be a trilogy. ;)

Zombie World: Winter Dregs was a great comic. I love Bob Fingerman's work. If any of you out there are over 18 you should check out Bob's "Minimum Wage" series. It was recently collected into a hardback titled "Beg the Question." It's an all around swell book that provides solid entertainment value page after page. I highly recommend it.

Hail,
When I saw the title The Walking Dead in the comic store, I jumped at it but when I saw it was in black and white I just put it back in the shelve but later I give it a try and a bought the third issue and I MUST APOLOGIZE for all I said about black and white artwork, It gives an more dramatic effect. Now I regret to had not buy the first and second issue...that's what I deserve maybe... But keep this good comic book and artwork like this, congrats again!

-Sputnik

Serves you right asshole! Didn't you hear? Black and white is the new color! On a side note, fellas... ladies... please sign your emails. If you do not... I will make up a name for you... like Sputnik here. Heh.

Greetings,
I have been reading this book since it came out and I was amazed at how impressive it looks. As a fan of zombie movies, I always love to see the reactions of the people in the movies and how they deal with such horrific situations. Movies like the Living Dead trilogy are to me the same as films like "The Possiedon Adventure," "The Towering Inferno" and "Earthquake." These movies show all have one terrific similarity: Drama. I

to say what a great job Mr. Moore has been doing in terms of art. The feel of the book reminds me of the original "Night of the Living Dead." This book is a constant reminder to cherish the things we still have and deal with whatever problems that may happen.

Thank you

Adam Langfelder

P.S.

Don't let this book get cancelled because I love it!!!!!!!

Thank GOD you told me Adam! This book was on the chopping block until I got this email. I mean... between Invincible, Brit, Captain America, and my Savage Dragon and SuperPatriot mini-series I was just getting a bit too busy for this book... but I'll stick it out, for you.

I picked up this book because my little brother told me not reading it was not a good idea. I just finished issue 6 and all I can say is wow. My ears are literally ringing, and I feel like I've just been shot. The true human emotion that you guys capture with this "zombie book" is amazing. I've never actually been able to hear a gunshot or any other sound effect by reading a comic book before, but when Carl shot Shane, it was one of the loudest things I've heard in my entire life. I know it's been said countless times before, but thanks for bringing us this book. It is the best thing I've read all year.

Nate Nease
Boulder, CO

Tell your little brother I said thanks, and that his check is in the mail.

Hey Kirkman!

Jesus! There's nothing bad to say. I recently finished obtaining all the current run of the walking dead series 1-6. And like any true college student, instead of writing my research paper, I didn't tonight to read all 6 of um. Amazing. Simply Amazing. Tony's Art, Your Writing,.. and it's good that it is black and white (makes the whole book more dramatic).

The art, man Tony is such a great artist. I love his stuff. Its so clean and detailed, and just so plain sometimes. I don't know how to explain it! It's amazing

The story. !!!!!. It is like watching a movie sometimes. A lot of your writing makes me think of just great cinematic moments. I think that's why people are just drawn to the 50 plus books you write J. And to it was not long ago when I saw that special mini-series (Superpatriot) that you and Cory did. Then I moved to Battle Pope, then Invincible, now Walking Dead. I hate you in fact. Why are you so good!

1. Thanks for not making the zombies run. That's one thing that's pissing me off with the new school of zombie movies. Thank

god you know what

your
doing.

would

also like

2. How's the new superpatriot coming along?

3. Since you write about a dozen books a month any way, how about this idea.... Marvel is going ape shit looking for people to replace their top talent because they're going to DC. Grant Morrison being one of them. So how about this... New X-men, Writer: Robert Kirkman, Artist: Dave Johnson

Hey then maybe you can be in the Wizard top ten writers. Hahah, I mean common, you should be #1Well until Image stops saying yes when you pitch a book, Make Mine Marv... err Kirkman!

Iggy Osorio

1. No shit... can you imagine how much this book would suck if I didn't know what I was doing?

2. It's coming along nicely. E.J. Su is doing a bang-up job. I think all the superhero fans that pick it up will enjoy it.

3. I've got no objections to that. Except for the Dave part... that guy's a lazy bastard!

Dear WDead Crew

I've written once before, but something new has come to my attention. I am a huge zombie fan, and your book is a wonderful addition to the zombie genre. But, this time I am going to skip the whole "zombies rule" stuff to say something totally different. You guys have really nailed it. Even without the zombies, this book is excellent. You have done a perfect mix of drama, suspense, horror, action, love and betrayal. I read a lot of comics, and I have to say, this truly is one of the best books on the market today. You grow to care and understand even the more minor characters in the book, and that is a hard act to pull off. I have been reading comics for over twenty years, and have seen few books that really flesh out a story like you guys do. I give you my word today, as long as this book is published, I will read it.

Nothing but praise
Arthur Marvin Jr.

P.S. Have you got a chance to check out "DeadWorld" yet?

I bought a TPB off ebay but I've yet to get around to reading it. I also can't figure out if it's the first story and I don't want to start in the middle! I flipped through it... it looks pretty cool.

Just wanted to drop a quick note to let you know I really enjoy your little zombie rag. The pacing is terrific, characterizations are intriguing and the art is just nifty.

I hope the book continues for quite awhile. You've got my support. Thanks for the great read!

Jeff

We'll

be
around for the long haul,
thanks to Adam's letter earlier. Seriously though...
with sales doing what they are, as long as the bot-
tom doesn't fall out of this horror craze we're living
through, we should be around a good long while. My
dream is to do at least 75 issues, but we'll see how we
do.

Robert and Tony:

You just put yourselves on the map with this one.

Incredible stuff.

Wow.

I loved it. I can't think of what else I could say. Mind
blown.

Sincerely,
Ryan Walsh

Can't argue with that. Thanks for the kind words
Ryan... though, as a I guy I remember from the Battle
Pope days I'm a little hurt that you didn't think we
were on the map before...

Walking Dead Crew,

I first spotted The Walking Dead in a Previews maga-
zine and the premise had me eager to try it out. I've
been on the train now for six issues and I don't intend
to get off any time soon. I usually pass up on Black
and Whites, but the Walking Dead has me taking a
second look. I'd love to see it in color sometime,
maybe volume 2?

I don't know what you have planned for these charac-
ters in the future, but I'd sure like to see what Arnold
Schwarzenegger looks like as a zombie. You wouldn't
have to do much for Maria, however.

Thanks,
Ashur Givargis
Elk Grove, CA

No color... EVER. No Schwarzenegger zombies.
Although, Maria Shriver has been in nearly every issue
thus far.

Hey guys,

Every issue of The Walking Dead I start reading I
always think that I know what's going on but by the
time I finish the issue I'm always stunned by what's
just happened. Issue 6 is a perfect example of this
those last three pages were so unexpected that I
couldn't take my eyes off the final page. After reread-
ing this issue I can see where everything in the past
couple of issues were leading up to this moment, this
confrontation but I never expected it to end this way.

Robert your pacing for the story has been spot on.
The way the events lead in from one sequence to
another is fantastic. Also the lettering and balloon

placement is done so well that it adds to the art in
heightening the story. The anger was jumping off of
the page when I was reading the book and the use of
"BLAM" behind Shane's head when he was shot really
showed the impact.

The story that's being told here goes way beyond what
I'd expect from a zombie comic

and that's
what I love about this book. The
characters seem so real we see the fear, hurt, and
anger in their eyes. This is one hell of an emotional
comic.

Congratulations in the bump up in sales, this book
deserves it.

Thanks for the great read,
George Gatewood

Thanks for all the compliments, George. Get your
brother to read it... and I'll mail you a check.

Dear sirs,

I must say that issue 6 was the best yet. It closed
the initial story arc perfectly, and made issue 5 seem
good to me. I have to admit, I thought you were slip-
ping with issue 5. It seemed very much as though you
were just "going through the motions", with typical
zombie action, typical interpersonal conflict, and typi-
cal post apocalyptic fireside chat. But issue 6 made
all of issue 5's events seem important, and though I'll
never LOVE issue 5, at least now I can like it.

Issues 1-4 were also outstanding, and I truly feel you
have done some of the best zombie storytelling.

I could try to explain more as to why I feel this way,
but I refuse.

What I refuse NOT to do is comment on your fre-
quent insistence that the title of your book "the walk-
ing dead" does not refer to the... (ahem) ZOMBIES
which occupy much of the thoughts and activities of
the characters there in.
(In Jesse Jackson voice) "This ridiculous. This is ludi-
crous. This is superfluous.

AND THISCANNOT STAND!"

I know you have the best intentions, but you are
being fool hardy. Take this hypothetical example as
an explanation of my point.

I have an idea for a new comic book. It's called "The
Killer Clowns of Washington". In the story, a bunch
of giant shoed, red afro wigged, face painted, tiny
car owning axe murders drive around Washington
trying to off war mongering politicians. Though
much of the story centers around the politicians
(most of whom are republicans), the tale is clearly
about the axe murdering Technicolor hobos who
threaten them and the affect they have on the
world. It's "Margret Thatcher's on the line, she says
that she can't help with the clown problem" and "
Is this fall out shelter clown proof?" and other such
banter in each and every issue.

My friend's, there could be no disputing the fact
that the clowns are the focal point of the story, and
the meaning of the title of the book. The story con-
tains killer clowns in Washington. The title is "the
killer clowns of Washington". No room for inter-
pretation there. Case closed. What you see is what
you get. Every issue, killer clowns are at the crux
of the tale. If there are no clowns in that issue, you
can sure as heck bet they'll be referred to. And the
whole thing takes place in Washington. So there
you have it.

The Killer
Clowns of Washington.

But then, in a wacky twist, I reveal in the letters column that the title of the book DOES NOT refer to the obviously killer clowns of Washington who are dressed as clowns and who kill people, but instead SOLELY REFERS to the war mongering politicians who play the victim to their homicidal yet comedic brutalizers. I say this because...

INFACT...

(wait for it)

... it's the war mongering politicians who are the real "KILLER CLOWNS OF WASHINGTON"!

Take that, reader of my comic book! You thought you knew what it was all about didn't you! But, noooooooo! You had it all wrong! Those killer clowns aren't THE killer clowns. It's those OTHER killer clowns are THE ACTUAL killer clowns!

Get it?

Hmmm, maybe I should state it more plainly.

It's fine to say that people robbed of their lives, their humanity, their sense of normalcy and security become soulless husks of their former selves, and therefore, could be described as "the walking dead". But it is not ok to say that people who can walk around but are really, truly not alive because they do not have a living body or capacity for brain function are NOT the walking dead.

To say that the walking dead are not the walking dead is just plain silly.

Those zombies in your comic book, they are the walking dead. They are walking, and they are dead. Hence, they are the walking dead. Now, those desperate and depressed living people in your comic book, they may be the METAPHORICAL walking dead, and you can say that the title of your comic refers to them all you want. But don't say your comic's title DOES NOT refer to the actual WALKING DEAD PEOPLE in your story, and instead refers ONLY to the TALKING ALIVE PEOPLE that are also in your story.

That gives me an idea. I'm going to start a comic book about a bunch of zombies who are dead and can't talk, and call it "the talking alive". There will also be a bunch of alive people who can talk in the story, but the title will most definitively not be in reference to them.

OK, I hope I've made my point.

Anyway, keep up the good work. I wouldn't have taken the time to write all that silly crap if your book weren't really affecting me.

And don't steal my idea.

Jonathan Holmes

PS. I haven't heard you sound off on the new DotD? You like?

Me

Sure, they can run, but it's still a good movie, and I feel like it showed the interpersonal conflict in a apocalyptic lawless world just as well as the original did.

By the way, I heard that the title "Dawn of the Dead" is actually NOT in reference to the zombies in the story, and is in fact a reference to the dog in the film, whose name is Chips. Apparently, the message of the film is "If you have to hang out with an annoying red haired girl who calls you 'Chips' for a couple of days, you will feel like death has dawned upon you".

As you would expect, the movie was originally called "Dawn of the Dead Dog", but the test audiences were confused by the title, as they happily expected to see a 2 1/2 hour film detailing the adventures of a dead dog, and were disappointed by all the zombies and the not dead dog that they got instead.

For real. That's what I read on the Internet.

Sorry... I stopped reading your letter halfway through. Let me get this straight... you didn't like issue five? Man... I thought that was a good issue. Oh well, some people are just hard to please I suppose.

Dear Letter Hacks,

I want to congratulate you on an excellent series thus far.

Judging by your letters column, I seem to be the only person to have been anticipating this series BEFORE it was released, as I had read previews of The Walking Dead on various comics news sites. As a new convert to the Church of Zombie, any news of impending undead goodness is good news to me (we'll just pretend the House of the Dead movie never happened). I can honestly say that despite my anticipation, you've surpassed any expectations I had, and have crafted an excellent series.

I also seem to be one of the few who doesn't give a rolling fuck that the opening scene was reminiscent to that of 28 Days Later. As a "writer" (and I use the term in it's loosest possible sense, as one who is capable of stringing words together in a quasi-coherent manner), I've started

and abandoned several projects (including a zombie series, you bastards) because of similar ideas that sprout up around the same time. I applaud you for sticking to your guns and not buckling to change the scene. I also commend you for being able to carve out your little zombie niche before the inevitable onslaught of walking dead projects that loom just over the horizon (in comics AND movies).

As far as the explanation for the zombies, I'm not sure that's necessary at all. While writing a zombie project of my own, I personally found the time and energy needed to explain the rising of the undead to be a detractor from the events and pacing of the story. Where time and page constraints are needed,

going to lengths to explain something that may or may not have true impact on the story seems pointless, and allows less time for character development. (Nice of me to give you the go ahead to flake out of the explanation, wasn't it?)

To the art. When I first read (and reread, and reread) Battle Pope, Mr. Moore's art struck me as good and a bit cartoony, and he obviously possessed a metric-fuckload of potential. When I opened The Walking Dead and saw his art for the first time since BP, I was awestruck. This dude has some serious chops. As such, I was disappointed to hear that Tony will be leaving the book, although the preview art I've seen from Charlie Adlard looks to be as much of an improvement on HIS previous work as Tony's improvement from BP to TWD.

Anyway, here's hoping that you can keep your series shuffling through the hordes of inevitable hungry rip-offs you're sure to inspire!

Sincerely,
Mike Caswell
<http://www.northboundcomics.com>

PS - Have you read Brian Keene's novel "The Rising"? It's an interesting take on the genre, and will help alleviate any remorse you feel over the mind-theft from 28 Days Later (*cough!* brutally sadistic soldiers *cough!*).

Read a novel? Huh? Are you kidding? There's no... pictures. As far as the explanation for the zombies go, I think that aside from the zombies being in the book this is a fairly realistic story, and that's what makes it work. The people do real things, and it's all very down to Earth... almost normal. ANY explanation would be borderline science fiction... and it would disrupt that normalness. In my mind, the story has moved on. I'm more interested in what happens next then what happened before that caused it all.

On Adlard's art... yeah, I didn't think it was possible but this issue was actually BETTER than issue 7. I'm shocked. Charlie is really bringing his A game to this project. I think it's stunning.

You did it again. I don't know how you do it, but every time I think this title isn't going to get any better than it is already, you go ahead and prove me wrong.

Issue 6 was easily the most emotional issue to date whether it was Jim's decision of his final fate or Andrea's silence or Shane and Rick finally coming to blows none of it can be matched. However, as powerful as these incidents were these don't come close to "It's not the same as killing the dead ones, Daddy." Actually I totally forgot it was a "Zombie World" book. Now THAT is the true indication of how powerful the writing and art on this book is.

I constantly rave about this book, trying to push it and am making headway. So far you are the only book I have been moved to congratulate almost every

Mine Dead.

Craig Wood
Cape Town
South Africa

Glad you liked the Issue Craig, we're really proud of how issue six turned out.

This is My first Letter ever written to A Comic Book, So I might as well Write to My Favorite Comic. Here are a few reasons Why "The Walking Dead" is one of the Best.

1:The Zombies are Zombies. They don't run, and Transformation takes Hours, Not Minutes.

2:The Approach on the Zombies sense of smell. (Cooking the deer was what drew them in the Camp in Issue#5, Ain't it?)

3:(You get this alot, But its true)BLACK & WHITE! The Look reminds me of The Original "Night of the Living Dead".

There are more, but you don't wanna hear all of them. Trust me. The first Issue I bought was #3. I WAS AMAZED! I immediately got a car ride back to my Local Hobby shop that my pal runs, and Ordered #1 and #2, the latter of those sold out, but I got 2nd printing now.

I just finished Issue #6, and I wish you guys would be Bi-weekly, But then I know rushing out comics would not be fun for you, and if it's no fun, Why do it? But you can damn well bet I'll be getting every Issue you put out. Its my dream. A ROMERO MOVIE THAT NEVER ENDS! Keep up the not good, not great, but AWE INSPIRING work!

-Jason

P.S. Ever heard of The Paper-&-Pencil RPG "All flesh must be Eaten"? Or the board Game "ZOMBIES!!!"?

I've heard of the game, but I've never seen or played it. I hear a lot of good things about it though. We'd love to take this book to bi-weekly but it's just not possible. Maybe someday though... heh.

Dear Robert,
I picked up your series on a recommendation from a friend and I'm glad I did! It has fast become the ONE title I actually look forward to reading each month! I found it interesting that you said the title refers to the survivors and NOT the zombies! Keep the twists coming!

I just finished reading TWD#6 and all I can say is WOW! You've killed off 3 characters in 2 issues! I didn't see that coming! I guess it's a sign of your writing skill that the issue had a lot of tension and unease in it and not a single zombie! I didn't even realize that fact until you mentioned it in the letters column!

Great job!

I've actually found my heart pounding faster while reading this title! That's amazing when you consider it's pretty hard to build terror & suspense in a silent medium like comics! The scene that really did this for me was from #4 when Rick & the boy had to enter the city looking for guns. I can't think of a more terrifying situation than that and then having to smear your body with zombie gunk to cover up their smell only made it worse! UGH!

I know a lot of people have mentioned DEADWORLD in the letter pages. I'm surprised you had never heard of it or read it before? It was a good series that unfortunately went away with the collapse of Caliber Comics. It put a new spin on the zombie genre with a talking, intelligent zombie leader (King Zombie) and the zombie plague was unleashed on earth due to dark magic. They weren't afraid to kill characters off in that series either which is always a plus and makes for a more realistic read.

Just wanted to send you these quick thoughts and wish you continued success. You guys deserve it! I'll be along for what I'm sure will be a LONG run.

Marc Cawiezel
Shit Hole Missouri

On second thought... that whole "The title refers to the survivors and not the zombies" thing sound pretentious as hell. So let's just forget I ever said it. All I really meant by it was that this book isn't about the zombies (as you should all know by now) and that there are going to be MANY issues that don't have one single zombie in them (like issue six). The title is "The Walking Dead" because I thought it sounded cool.

You know I never lend out my comic books. I take them home, read them and put them away for months at a time until I feel like I want to read them again. But then this book comes out and changes all that, I mean it has zombies, substance, emotion and did I mention zombies? So I start lending the issues to friends only to get them back by the time the next issue comes out finding the back cover has the number of finger prints you would find in a small country, damn glossy black. So I guess I'm saying this is a

damn good book and I'm going to have to make my friends start to purchase it themselves, they're cut off from mine! Keep up the good work.

Sean Delaney

Well, starting with last issue we did away with those pesky fingerprint attracting black back covers. I hope you like the new white ones. I was a bit wary at first but I think they've grown on me.

Hey there,

I'd first like to start by mentioning that the whole 28 days thing is pointless. When I first saw the trailer me and my dad both immediately said hey cool, a Day of the Triffids movie. I do suggest you pick that book up...its very good. And yet no one mentioned it, because it's a rather little known book, and I think quite hard to find here in America (personally someone bought it for me in England). Good movie though. Plus it makes perfect sense that he'd be in a hospital, otherwise what could have happened? "They left while I was sleeping" hahaha. Great idea to have one of the

characters get bitten but not die, I anticipate a very powerful scene deciding weather to kill him. Then again no one has been bitten before, so we don't know how long it takes. Could be anywhere from Dawn of the Dead (very quickly) to Resident Evil (takes a few hours). I'd also like to mention that issue 4 cost me like \$15, *damn comic book stores*. So I wish I'd known about the TPB earlier grrrr.

I shall continue to be an avid reader

t0m0

Sorry about that. From now on, keep in mind TPBs will be collecting the series in six issue chunks from here on out. If you miss an issue, wait for the TPB instead of paying \$15. Unless I'm selling it. Of course, the TPBs won't all be \$9.95 like the first one, that was just an introductory, drug-dealer marketing scheme.

And that does it for this issue, folks. See you back here next month for issue 9 when things start to get... interesting (that'll be nice for a change, huh?).

Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Issue 11, damn... check it out guys. Issue 11. This is so cool. Both of my creator owned regular series are in double digits. I gotta admit... a year ago... I didn't know if I'd EVER get to do an issue 10. I repeat, this is so cool.

Now that we've got THAT out of the way. Some of you may have noticed that we've slipped in the schedule, and also that this issue is shipping a couple weeks after issue 10 (or it SHOULD have barring any printing mishaps). I'm doing something at Marvel called Marvel Knights 2099 and I swore up and down that my Marvel work wouldn't get in the way of Invincible and this fine title... BUT, a strange thing happened... an entire month went by without me realizing I needed to letter and turn in these issues that Charlie was sending me. I just didn't... notice. I had these five Marvel Knights one-shots thrown into my lap at the last minute and all five scripts were due at the same time, that time being NOW. I kinda lost track of days in there... and then the San Diego Con threw another wrench into the plans. Anyway... I've fixed it, and as a result we'll be seeing a rapid succession of issues until we get to issue 14. There should be no more than two or three weeks between each issue. I hope to have 13 and the TPB containing issues 7-12 out on the last Wednesday in October... so let's see if I can manage that. Oh, and sorry guys. I promise I won't let this happen again.

Just to reiterate, this was NOT Charlie's fault. Charlie's been nothing but a professional on this title and has been early turning in every issue this far. I'm the fuck up here. Direct hate mail to ME. You know where to find me.

You can send some Cliff's way too if you want. I'm sure he deserves it for something... the fucker.

Now that that's off my chest... let's dive into the ol' mailbag and see if anyone's got anything interesting to say.

Hi guys,

Just wanted to take time out to say what a fantastic comic you've got going here. Not only does it concern zombies (They don't run! Yay!), but it's also one of the best written and wonderfully drawn books out there.

As you may have guessed, I'm not a big fan of running zombies. That was my one major gripe with the new Dawn of the Dead, although admittedly it did add a certain element of surprise and danger that is sometimes missing from films featuring the slower zombies. But then saying that, what I've always liked about zombie films (such as Romero's trilogy) is that despite the selling point being the presence of zombies, the main focus is on the characterization of the survivors and how they cope with the new world that is facing them, and I'm glad to see a similar approach in your series.

As we found out with Shane in the first story arc, a lot of the time the problems arise from the survivors and the zombies are just an unpleasant addition to the mix.

The art is another aspect of the series that works really well - the black and white suits the tone of the stories and from what I've seen we're in good hands (no pun intended...).

Needless to say, as long as the level of characterization and awesome stories continue, you'll find me a regular reader. Hell, even if you do eventually bring in aliens and stuff like that, I'm definitely along for the ride until the very end.

Here's too many years of the dead walking the Earth!

Simon Prior (UK)

What can I say other than WOO, and thanks for the kind words?

Hi Mr. Kirkman and The Walking Dead Crew,

I know many say this but I really mean it when I say, this is the first time I have ever written a letter to be printed in a comic book! I saved it for the HOLY GRAIL of intense ZOMBIE DRAMA BOOKS, The Walking Dead! Guys, this book is, GOD I wish I can come up with a better word, &%%\$&ing GREAT!!!! I read many books ranging from all comic book companies but your book is by far the best story to date! I want to be a writer, but with the small amount of time that I have it is very hard, but because of your great storytelling, it has inspired me to get back to track and start writing again! You guys are incredible! I just picked up issue #9 and man, can you say HBO MINI SERIES! Screw making a movie, (even though that would be sweet) but what I can see is a mini series on HBO titled THE WALKING DEAD!!!! How sweet would that be?! Just like running to the comic book store every month to pick up the latest issue of TWD, now you would have to run home every Sunday night at 9:00 and on HBO a new episode!!!! CAN YOU SAY "WOO HAA"!! Anyway, I know you guys are busy making the HOTTEST book this side of COMICVILLE so I will let you go till next time. Thanks for reading my letter and again, Keep up the AWESOME work and ROCK ON!!!

An Honest FAN,
Toney Tapia

P.S. If there is a live mini series or movie, can I rock with you guys as a hardcore ZOMBIE!!!?

No. We'll not be having any "hardcore" zombies in any live-action version of TWD... that's just too low brow for us. And what's up with you just wanting a mini-series? We're not good enough for a full on series? What the hell man. I almost didn't print your letter. In FACT, I still might not... just to spite you.

Hot damn, issue #9 was awesome. This series leaves me on the edge of my seat like no other. The endings are always exciting as hell. I just hate the wait between every issue! I know that's how comics work though, and I'm used to it by now. Keep up the good work.

-Mike Neuman

The wait between issues WILL be shorter over the next three months.

Letter Hacks,

Holy shit. Issue #9. Just...damn. Carl. Shot. Totally didn't see that coming at all. I'm not gonna bother to ask if he's alright, I'm sure I'll find out next issue before this gets printed(if it even does). But see that's the thing I love about this book. The unpredictability of it. No matter how much you love the character, knowing that at any second something could happen to them just makes it all the more enjoyable to anticipate and read each month. Adlard's art is really adapting to the book. I'm really enjoying it more and more with each issue. I wish I could write more but I'm still sort of reeling from it. I trust you guys, I know it'll turn out in a kick ass way.

Keep it coming!
- Mike Storniolo

Man, look at young Mike Storniolo taking the reigns from Chris Piers as guy-who-gets-a-letter-printed-in-every-issue. I guess Chris got a date... or some action of some kind from a member of the opposite sex... or same sex... I don't really know what he's into. I could tell you what I THINK he's into though... have you seen the guy? And yes, Mike... Adlard is kicking much ass with this book. I'm excited as you guys are when I first see his pages. Adlard = The Man.

Zombiologists,

Daa-yam! Carl's shot! Didn't see that coming.

Which is why I really like what you all are doing. I never know what to expect (which ain't easy in this medium). And I'm torn, ta boot. If Carl isn't dead, I'll be a little disappointed, but also very relieved. Disappointed because "I knew you wouldn't kill him". Relieved because I've really gotten close to the little guy.

And Charlie kicks! I was skeptical at first, but was very pleasantly surprised when he debuted with issue 7. I've followed his work since the X-Files. He's improved dramatically (and I liked his work before). I never imagined I'd prefer his take on the material better Tony's, but I honestly do. He brings an amazing amount of needed atmosphere to the book. With issue 9, he has hit his stride.

75 issues, huh? Or will you have changed it to 100 by the time the next issue comes out? No matter. I'm there.

Later,
Chip from Tampa, FL

You're right. I suck... I'd never kill Carl, he ain't dead. Congrats to you for seeing it coming. It was also spoiled on previews of the cover for this very issue, so I doubly suck. Sorry. And yeah... I'd like to do AT LEAST 75 issues but this isn't a Preacher, Transmetropolitan, Bone type book where I want to do 75 or so and quit. I want to do as much as I possibly can. If Charlie and I were working on issue 150 thirteen years from now... I'd be a happy man. I wonder how Charlie would feel? Probably sick of drawing people standing around talking, I would think.

Touché, Kirkman.

Perhaps I just wanted very badly for Charlie Adlard to have drawn Mantooth?

Well played,
Chris

* No disrespect to Andy Kuhn. Though, I suppose I've inadvertently done just that. Let's burn some bridges then—fuck that guy

Yes. Indeed, fuck that guy. Also... fuck those of you reading this who don't get that the above letter references a letter and response from a previous letters column. Actually, though... I love that Andy Kuhn... he's a fucking stud too... just so you know.

Hey Robert, Charlie and Cliff,
Just wanna congratulate you guys on an awesome issue this month. Nice fucking cliffhanger again Robert! Damn, you gotta stop doing that. But I'm definitely getting use to Charlie's art and really liking it. Just thought I'd let you guys know what a good job you were doing, like you already don't know. Thanks

Mark B.

I knew the changeover would be tough to take at first, and change is difficult, but Charlie really pulled out all the stops and is kicking much ass on this book. I knew you guys would fall in love with the guy as much as I have. Good thing we've got that Atlantic Ocean between us, eh Charlie?

Dear Dead Walkers,

Now, I've been a fan of the Zombie genre for quite a while now. I don't buy too many monthly comic titles, but I saw the Days Gone Bye paperback and I thought I'd give it a shot. All I can say is: HOLY FREAKING CRAP!! This is Zombies done right! The characters, the story, and the artwork were all so spot on I could sing (don't worry, I won't). I ran right out and snapped up issues 7-9. I then let my girlfriend and her sister borrow them, and now we're all hooked. A whole month seems so long to wait for the next installment now! I do have to admit I was very disappointed to see Mr. Moore go. Nothing against Mr. Adlard, but Moore's style was just so perfect for the subject matter. Ah, you're probably sick of hearing that by now. One touch I found very gratifying is the length of the letters pages. In a time when most comics don't even bother with one now it's nice to see some genuine feedback. Now just a few quick questions before this e-mail gets any longer:

1. Any chance of Zombie Dogs in the future? or are only humans affected? 2. Which month are our heroes in by this point? 3. If you had to pick one all time favorite Zombie movie of all time, which would it be? Ever played the "Zombies!!!" board game? I highly recommend it.

Keep it coming, -Jason Price
PS- pleasepleaseplease don't let Cory be dead!

Who the hell is Cory?

1. No dog zombies. Only Humans are effected. Haven't been keeping track. I'm thinking March or so, by this issue. Day of the Dead. No. I don't care.

Robert,
HOLY CRAP!!!!

How could you do that to little Carl? He's the first kid in a comic I didn't feel like chucking out a 9th story window! Other than that the issue still rocked! Keep up the great work and I'm still into "Dead" for the long haul!
John L. Parduba

Relax, Carl's fine.

Hi,

I own a comic shop up in Lacey, WA. I have been reading your book only for a couple months, now (sorry). I love it, though. The irony is that my fiancée has been a HUGE fan of both this and Invincible. He spent month after month trying to get me to add them to my ever growing stack of reads. I try to read just about all the comics that come out, but I am not a fan of Zombie fare, so, sadly, I skip them, and leave them to my resident Zombie Fanatic. When the trade paperback came out, I decided to give it a whirl. I LOVED IT! LOVE IT! LOVED IT! What an amazing read! I must say that I was happy to have read it as a trade, because your freaking cliffhangers drive me nuts! I just finished reading #9, for the third time. And yep, every time, Carl gets shot. I can't wait for the next one. I read a lot of comics in my week...but, there are my Wednesday reads. The special few that I take time out of the busiest day of the week to read...this one has hit the list:)

It is consistently on the "Gabi's Picks" list now. :) It is one of the books I put in people's hand that like Zombies, Survival Comics, stories about people interacting, or anything else I can think of. We went from selling 5 copies a month to ordering 35 in the last previews....that beats out some of my Batman, X-title numbers! We are not a huge shop so, those numbers may not be impressive to you, but for us, those are good, solid numbers. I have sold over 20 of the first tradepaperback, and have ordered more. :) We give a money back guarantee on it. If they don't like it, they can bring it back. Not a single return to date:) It is a great book, and I really enjoy it.

In addition, we have upped order on all your other books. Like the new 2099 series, we

ordered more of because of your quality of writing:)

Thanks for the fun read, keep up the good work.

If you ever have any plans on being in this neck of the woods, we would LOVE to have you for a signing. I was sad that I didn't get a chance to meet you at San Diego Con. We were there for far too short a stay:(

Thanks!
Gabi

It's always good to hear from the retailers of the world. I hear a lot of you saying that you have a money back guarantee on Invincible and/or The Walking Dead and I must say that I REALLY appreciate that. It's nice to hear about good full-service retailers helping sell the books. You guys already have SOOOOO much on your shoulders (as I mentioned in a previous letters column) and the fact that so many of you are going that extra mile and taking time to REALLY promote my books does not go unappreciated. Thank you very much.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,
I am one of the owners of a small shop in Des Moines, Iowa and would like to thank you for your comments in issue number nine about preordering and sales. You nailed down, better than anyone I've heard recently, the problems the retailer faces. Most people do not understand what it's like to run a comic shop. It's not all sun and cloudless skies. It's tough. When a retailer takes a risk on a title, because it looks interesting, they think it can sell or ties into better selling books during a crossover, all the extra copies left sitting on the shelf are non-returnable. Most retailers get between 45 and 55 percent discount on the comics they order and less on action figures and specialty merchandise. So, the ten extra copies left over of that "hot" new book by that "hot" new artist/writer team with a suggested retail price of \$2.99 each is going to be a loss of \$15. I hope the next time people go into a comic shop, they should take a look at the shelves. Every book on the racks is for the retailer to keep and I for one don't need eight extra copies of the latest issue of Iron Man in my personal collection. All those books have been paid for and are generating NO revenue.

The thing is there isn't a shop I've been in that doesn't offer a hold policy of some kind. Most retailers, the true backbone of the comic book industry, use hold customer preorders as one of the biggest tools in judging what to buy and what to take chances on.

The Walking Dead is an amazingly good book both when it comes to writing/art as well as sales. I am happy to say that The Walking Dead is one of our top ten best sellers. However, I know at least two other shops in town don't even carry it. The eternal dilemma of the small press comic. Preorder-ers are to thank for some of the increase in our sales, but word of mouth is easily the best tool. I love the zombie horror genre and I ordered TWD for myself, while taking the risk of eight issues for my shop. It sold okay at first, mostly due to my recommendation. Purchases stayed around ten a month until the trade came out. I thank you, Mr. Kirkman, for using the trade paperback how it should be used, to help sell the ongoing series. I've now nearly tripled my orders in less than a year, thanks to the trade, unheard of for any other book in our shop.

Sorry, to prattle on. I just had to express my gratitude to you for your comments. I truly wish more creators would sound off on the problems in the industry.

Nonetheless, thanks and keep up the great work on what is easily one of my personal favorites right now.

Matt Johnson
Co-Owner
Cup o' Kryptonite
4521 Fleur Drive Suite F
Des Moines, Iowa 50321

Thanks for the letter Matt. Like I said above... my thanks to you and your retailing brethren for really busting ass for this book and MAKING it a success. I don't usually print addresses but I figured this was the address of your store and if people are in the area, I want people to support you. Although, from what you say in your letter... if people are READING this letters column, and they live in your area... they probably got this book from you in the first place... so I'm really just wasting my time. People... drive to Des Moines, give this guy your money. He's one of the good guys. Cool store name, by the way.

Dear Letter Hacks,
Here's my letter, in haiku...

It is really weird
How Kirkman thinks up plot lines
That I'd like to live.

Not that I'm psycho,
But wouldn't it be crazy
If that did happen?

Zombies all over...
One thing's for sure, it would change
Our priorities!

In the ninth issue,
They all just want food (or sex).
Pretty basic needs.

Anyway, point is -
Some of us (in a sick way)
Would welcome that world.

It would certainly
Be one exciting life, huh?
If just for a while...

But soon we'd go nuts
With no police to stop us.
Justice - ours to make.

Rick has a big choice.
And I can't wait to find out!
Will he shoot that dude?

Well, by now we know...
But what would each of us do
In poor old Rick's place?

Kirkman, your brain's neat!
I'm getting used to the art.
Different, but cool.

Again, Robert, thanks
For making a dark, odd world
That we can live in!

Now I've got to go!
There's a zombie in my yard!
Yes!!!...No...shit...mailman.

Bye-O!
Stephen Lacombe
Belleville, Ontario

Wow... my first Haiku. I was going to be all clever and try and reply to you in a Haiku but y'know... I'm just too tired for that right now... so you'll just have to settle for me making fun of you. A Haiku?! What the hell were you thinking, man? That's just WACKY... immensely wacky. Jesus... I hope that isn't your real name.

Glad you like the book.
What's coming up next is cool.
I think you'll dig it.

I'm going to go laugh until I pee blood now.

Dear Mr Image Big Shot,

(Had a ring to it in Issue 9 that I liked :D)

So..... you big mean bastard.... shooting kids in the fucking back now!! That's just so fucking cruel! LoL... what a shocking and depressing end to issue 9! and a great way to let the suspense build in time for issue 10! Shame that the previews for issue 11 kind of spoil the fate of young Carl's destiny in this horrific world, but like some people on the image forums have said, we still don't know what Rick will do with this guy who shot Carl! Now? Why, if you can across 3 zombies. Two big adults and a kid, would you kill the kid first? Obviously the adults are going to be bigger and more powerful. As well as cover more distance if you need to scurry away! That's it, I'm not going to speculate more on it.... it will just get me gagging for the next issue more, and is obviously your plan (Damn you Robert!) Few things I have to say about the letters column in the same issue. One, thanks for printing my letter. Ever since I started using my mates (Tim Gentles also in the letters column for that issue) computer, I have posted a letter to you after every issue, and not only did I get one in. But I got my issue 6 and 7 letter in. So thanks again. Glad to hear that you didn't want to end it at 75 if you could. I sure that I can vouch for plenty of other 'Deadites' around the world, that we will support this book till the end. It really is something

special! Okay so like many people said, Tony Moore was a big loss when he left the book, and its a shame he couldn't stay on, and even though it took a few issues to get used to, I have to say that both Cliff and Charlie have done a outstanding job at taking over and I am glad that you have decide to use these talented artists. Good job guys, and keep up the good work :D I have to agree with Chris Piers's letter. The new addition of Tyreese is excellent, and just what the group needs. The one thing I am looking forward to seeing now is, someone famous joining the group and seeing how they are effected in the world. Should be an interesting way of seeing how they are coping with the sudden life style change.

Anyway, off I go.... got other comics to read But I seriously enjoying it
RK, and I have pre-ordered up to issue 13 and ordered the second arc's
Trade Paperback, and now am getting two copies of each issue!

Now that's a fan for ya!

Lee Sanders (Little Lee)
SW England

P.S. Heard the good news at Comic Con. Congratulations! You going to be there next year? I might have to buy a canoo and come over. :D

Actually, Lee. If you've seen Dawn of the Dead you'll remember that child zombies are actually quite hyper and much faster than adult zombies. Either that or child actors just couldn't grasp the whole concept of moving slow and moaning. In fact... that scene in Dawn of the Dead may be the first appearance of the dreaded "fast zombies" that seem to be plaguing our fine genre. As far as bringing a celeb into this book, I just don't think it's something I want to do. I just get flashbacks to the Tom Petty scene in the Postman... and I know I could never top the emotion conveyed in it with anything I could do here. So I figure... why try?

Hello Walking Dead folks,

I love zombie movies, and I have zombie holocaust dreams quite frequently.

I was sort of skeptical of zombie comics at first. After describing a zombie dream to my local comic dealer, he turned me on to Walking Dead. I bought the trade on my lunch break and I didn't get any work done for the rest of the day. Your book sucked me in and there was no escape. I had zombie dreams all night long.

Now I'm getting the single issues and I LOVE IT! I just picked up issue nine today, and again I'm not getting any work done.

I can't believe the end of this one. That was so HARSH! My only complaint is that I can't read issue ten RIGHT NOW!

Make more faster!

You've got my money for as long as this book exists.
Keep up the great work!
-Chris Taylor

Gayest letter ever. Zombie DREAMS?! You should have written a haiku.

Just read issue number 9. Damn. And I thought I was a rotten bastard. What you did at the end of this issue (another stroke of brilliance) was just...damn brave. Congrats. How's your karma these days 'cause after killing that kid I have a feeling some bad mojo may be on the way.

Keep up the great work, Rob!
Ryan "Rotten" Turek

My karma is just fine... you see, not only is the kid not dead, but he's also NOT REAL. See, I have all my bases covered.

Dear Letter Hacks,

First, let me say that I greatly enjoy the work all of you put into not just TWD, but all the other books you work on. I have been with TWD since #1 and look very much forward to each next issue.

Now that I have said that, let me get to the reason for this letter. I just finished issue 9 and have noticed alot of artist bashing in the past few issues. Granted Tony Harris is one of the most talented out there. More so than certain cover hogs out there. But, you have to understand that it was time for him to go on to other things. We are now at a point where the TWD story will be getting a bit darker. Characters will be acting more out of emotion than logic. What better way to reflect this than with an artist that has a more "heavy and thick" look to his work. Honestly, this title could have started with Adlard and Rathburn and later switched to Harris and we would be hearing the same complaints in reverse. People just need to accept that Tony is gone and the book is now in the more than capable hands of Charlie and Cliff. If you have read issue 9 yet, you would know that this title is going to be taking us in a whole new direction now. I won't spoil the ending, but let's just say the new art will be shown as the masterpiece it is.

Anyway, I just had to take a few moments to defend the guys that give me my favorite monthly series.

Also, in the letters page of issue 9, one person suggested a TV show. I could just see it....the Doctor Who of zombies. Man am I gonna have some sweet dreams tonight.

Take care and I am looking forward to issue 10 and beyond.

Tone Penley
Tampa, FL

Tony Harris is indeed a talented fellow. The problem was that DC snatched him up to illustrate Brian K. Vaughan's wonderful new title, Ex Machina at the same time Marvel grabbed him to illustrate Mark Rickett's Iron Man run (which is shipping along side my four-issue run on Captain America). So he was more than a little busy and had to move on. Anyway, glad you did what Charlie and Cliff are doing--or as I like to call them; the C & C music factory.

Letterhacks,

Oh, Robert... What have you done?

I almost never make it to my comic store on New Comic days. It's hard enough getting out there once a month, let alone every Wednesday. So I've gotta keep myself from reading spoilers and asking people what happened in your comics until I'm actually able to pick up the issues I had been missing. But sometimes I get too curious and I must know at least a little bit. Try to imagine my terror when I logged in at PJ and read that you had offed yet another character. First thought that came to mind was you had done in Rick. But that didn't make any sense because I had seen the cover with a gun to the back of his head for a later issue... which DIDN'T make me feel any better, just to let you know. Second thought was that it was either Dale or Andrea because everyone knows that you're not supposed to have sex in these kinda stories!... or does that rule only apply to horror movies? But then I continued to read on and saw a comment by a fellow PJer stating that the ending to #9 was even worse if you have kids.

...Kids? No way. Robert wouldn't kill a kid says I!

I hate it when I'm wrong. Not only did poor little Carl have to go but so did Donna. It took me a while but I had actually begun to like her. And then you did it again... just like you did with Jim. You took them away. But the worst thing about this is that it is all done so very well! I know that their deaths are going to have a greater impact on future issues. I just love all these character so much. More so than, dare I say, any other comic character I've ever read. They are, for lack of a better word, real. No bulging muscles, no perfect hair or spandex. These people could be my neighbors! So of course I'm saddened when not only one, but two characters are killed off in one issue. And xadrian was right. It is MUCH worse when you have kids.

Anyway, enough babbling. I'm not up there with Chris Piers yet. Charlie, you are doing wonderfully. They all seem

more natural in this issue and I can't wait to see what you've got for us in the next one. Robert, exceptional as always... even if you do keep killing the characters I like. Awesome issue, guys. Keep it up!

Jenn Lee

The sad reality of this series is that characters have to die. That's just the facts. One way to make sure that you readers are always surprised by who dies is to kinda make these decisions on the fly. When I started the script for 9 I knew somebody was going to die, but I hadn't decided who until I had mapped out the whole issue. I think it keeps things more true to life if I play it this way. It's also more fun. In the future though, the deaths will become less frequent as our characters settle in. So far it's been and every three issues or so. I want to at least once go about 10 issues without anyone dying... let's see if I can pull that off.

Dudes

Since reading a review of your book in SFX magazine I immediately bought the first book and instantly hooked. I hope you can carry this on for years and years. How cool would a "The Walking Dead" television series be, being able to develop stories and characters over 22 episodes a season. I think the American television networks better start giving you calls. Has there ever been a zombie television drama?

To all American zombie fans I recommend Shaun of the Dead which should be hitting your cinemas soon, very funny, very scary and one of the best zombie movies since Day of the Dead.

Anyway love the book and wont stop reading till you stop writing.

Blake Goddard
Leicester, UK

I didn't know we were reviewed in SFX magazine. I suppose by your reaction is was a positive one. A TV series would be nice. I know I'D certainly love to see one. We'll see if it happens though. Any developments on that front will be announced here first. Shaun of the Dead is in fact an AWESOME damn movie. It should be in theatres here in the states by the time this issue sees print, so I recommend you all run out and see it immediately. Don't let the comedy fool you, this is a full on, kick ass, zombie movie... that also happens to be funny. The gore is there, the zombies are there, the effects are great. It's a fine flick.

Kirkman, you Bastard.

I hate zombies. I've never seen a zombie movie. I've never wanted to see a zombie movie. The only reasons I even bought this book was because of Invincible. That and your shameless plugs at San Diego, as you autographed each issue for me. Invincible is awesome. That horrible plot turn with Omni was awesome. (I loved the trash bag gag.)

I hate that while reading TWD in a small room, I'm afraid that when I go back into the main house, all my family will be zombies. I hate that I was afraid to sleep out on my deck last night in the cool summer night. I hate that I can't wait until the next issue comes out.

Damn you Kirkman.
-Brian Powell

Is this hate mail? I just can't tell.

Hello Mr Kirkman,

This is the first time I have written to comic so please bear with me, the comic is simply fantastic, sheer genius. I always leave your comic till last out of my weekly comic bundle, just to savour it, the best till last.

Seeing that a lot of people that write to you from the United Kingdom always seem to be English, as a Scotsman I thought it was my duty to tell you that a fair amount of Scottish people read you comic as well! We are lucky enough to have 3 comic shops in Aberdeen, and your comic always sells out, sometimes there are not enough for the pre-orders either! (any chance of sending more the U.K's way?)

Anyway here are a couple of questions I hope you will answer:

1. At first I agreed with "He who is Q" in the issue 9 letters page about Charlie Adlard, but now I find his take on the series growing on me, hopefully he will be with us for a while yet but are planning to get other artists to have a turn on the comic?

2. Have you heard about Shaun of the Dead? Its Britain's take on the Zombie flick (better than 28 days later in my opinion) and is Bloody funny to boot. I urge you to check it out, most American Movie sites seem to have a few articles/ trailer downloads on the film!

3. I know your comic is centered on America and American characters, but how has the rest of the world dealing with the Living dead? Have less populated countries (say like Saudi Arabia, Greenland and Australia) did they manage to contain the menace more effectively, maybe still having some form of government? I know you have to centralize on the "little people" and ignore the larger picture but it would be interesting to find out what happened to the rest of the planet.

Anyhow, cheers for listening and keep up the good work!

Paul Middleton
Scotland (United Kingdom)
Aberdeenshire

Yeah, I've notice that an unusual amount of mail on this book comes from the UK. I think that's cool as hell. Good to have all you dirty foreigners aboard. Now, for the questions.

1. This is Charlie's book for as long as he'll take it. I love his work, doing this book with him has been a dream come true. I hope he stays on it for years and years.

2. Seen it, loved it, raved about it in this letters column many times. Seek out "Undead" as well. It's also a great flick.

3. I don't even know how the rest of the world is doing. The thing about this book is that it focuses on Rick and crew. These people would never really figure out what's going on in California, let alone Australia. So we may never find out what's going on in the rest of the world. Although, as with most thing, only time will tell.

Dear Storyteller of Warm Fuzzy Tales,

Issue #9 was great and all but why is no one looking or listening to any form of communication equipment? Some sort of radio should be on at all times. In issue #9 the thing you did the best was really present that even though the zombies walk slow - you can still get in a panic when you see them and any misstep could be fatal.

I wanted to ask you about a horror theory I heard years ago. Basically, the theory was that horror was popular in odd numbered decades. 1930's - Dracula, 1950's - UFO's & Aliens, 1970 - Exorcist & DC/Marvel Horror, 1990's - All the horror nostalgia movies. So we should be in a horror free decade now right? Well, it was a loose theory based that when times got scary so did the horror genre and then things calmed down and horror took a back seat. But it seems horror and scary subject matters are all the norm these days, especially in comics. Do you think the world just got constantly scarier the last few years and horror might be here to stay?

Brendan Walsh

That may be the case. I do enjoy the horror genre a great deal but if THIS is what we have to put up with in order for it to thrive... no thanks. I do think you've figured it out though. As for the communications thing, Rick was out for a good deal of the initial reactions and whatnot to the zombie threat. By the time he got to Atlanta our crew had given up on listening to radios... batteries... electricity... these things aren't exactly growing on trees, and are usually used for more important things like flashlights.

Dear Letter Hacks,

I cut my teeth on adult-themed comics with some of the best: Sandman and Preacher. I liked the surrealness

of Sandman and the boldness of Preacher. I'd trade both for The Walking Dead. I'm loving this book very much. Great work by all. I think Charlie Adlard is doing an excellent job as new interior artist and I'm very grateful that Tony Moore is still able to do covers (issue #9 has to be one of the best covers of all time). I have mixed feelings on the greys, but for the most part they make the black and white more "real" (how else would you describe it?). And the writing... if Ellis is Hemingway, you're Stephen King. You make the unbelievable - believable. Seeing Carl shot at the end of #9 let's me know that no one's safe, there are no safe characters' (except maybe Rick and in my opinion, he shouldn't be untouchable either) and that is a King-like twist. But most of all, you really develop the characters. If the characters are believable then the whole story is.

Questions:

1) Love the fact that you're not going to explain where the zombies came from. However, what about the impact this would have on survivor's beliefs. I'm an evangelical Christian and I often think, how would something like this affect my faith? Would I abandon it, change it, or maintain it? I have thought that a great idea for a story would be a Christian Youth Retreat out in the woods under a living dead siege. Imagine that dialogue! "Where's God in all this?" Suddenly a few "F-bombs" by the unruly teens would seem inconsequential, or would it?

2) If The Walking Dead makes it to television, rather than live action can we have animation (ala Todd McFarlane's Spawn - yeah I bet you didn't think evangelical Christians would watch read The Walking Dead or even watch "Spawn", well we know of one that does)? I don't know if you'd have any say in that but if you did, that would be the best way to see the characters "colorized" and "come to life"

3) Without giving anything away, I'm pretty sure Carl was shot by a survivor who was defending himself, not against the undead, but "scavengers" (that would explain the destroyed food in the general store, they couldn't take it and didn't want anyone else to have it). Romero's working a new dead film where class warfare is the main conflict. We'll see possible civil war? Such as, one community of survivors vs. another community over resources? (this would be a strong possibility down, if this group keeps coming across survivors then we might assume there are other groups like them and if they're not "scavengers" then the drama is tenfold! Who do you root for when both sides are fighting for survival, can the coexist?).

If this sees print in the back of your book it'll take up a lot of coveted letter space. This is my first letter to any comic book and as long you're around it won't be my last. Keep the TPBs coming. I collect the monthlies, but love the TPB for real "sitdown" reading (I missed #1 and #2, but the TPB made up for it). If there is a successor to Stephen King or George Romero, Robert Kirkman may be the man (even if your work isn't truly "horror" or "macabre").

Merl Key
Columbus, IN.

PS - Have you ever spoken to George Romero? If there is a fifth dead movie he should let you handle the script!

1. We'll be dealing with a little religion in upcoming issues. But not exactly in the way you're thinking.
2. I'd love to see it as a live-action show with the color washed out. Maybe not totally black and white... but dulled down and muted, not quite realistic colors. I think that would be neat.
3. Stay tuned.

Oh, come on... you can't ALL be writing in to a comic for the first time, I mean COME ON! The TPB's will be coming every six months. We'll have a TPB in October and April of every year as long as this book continues. Never spoke to George, but I'm easy to get in touch with.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Just finished reading Issue #9. Wow! You sure know how to knock your readers for a loop. I sure hope that little Carl isn't dead. (That's a testament to your skills as a writer. Most children in comics are too obnoxious to care about.) I've been loving "THE WALKING DEAD" since issue one. Thanks for giving us intelligent, moving, poignant, character-driven stories that still manage to be creepy, scary, suspenseful, and full of surprises. I have to admit that I miss Mr. Moore's art, but Mr. Adlard is doing a GREAT job. I especially loved the panels on page nine showing the zombies reacting to the gunshot. As a reader, you couldn't help but respond, "Oh, s**t!!!"

As an African-American reader, I also want to thank you for your realistic, non-stereotypical depictions of minority characters. It's great to see people of color featured prominently in the storylines.

"THE WALKING DEAD" is one of my favorite reads each month. Keep up the FANTASTIC work you're doing, and I'll keep reading! Take care!

Sincerely,
Christopher Providence

Oh, come on, aside from Morgan in the first issue, the first prominent black character I introduce is a damn pro sports player! Not to mention the fact that he latched on to the only single white chick almost immediately. You should be up in arms!! I'm perpetuating stereotypes here. Didn't you see the issue where Glenn used his Kung Fu math skills?

Wow. The initial 6 issue story arc was powerful, but this new arc is just fantastic! I've just read #9 & it blew me away. Comic of the year by a clear mile! Keep up the great work guys.

Mark Jarvis
London

PS Whenever you name-check artist Charlie Adlard's work you never mention the incredible stuff he's done this side of the pond on 2000AD over the last few years - particularly on 'Judge Dredd' & most recently on the funk'n' great Pat Mills penned 'Savage'.

Sorry. I've never really picked up any 2000AD stuff (sorry) so I'm not familiar with Charlie's stuff there. But he recently sent me some jpegs of the stuff he did prior to taking over this book and I must say... it's some of his best work. I absolutely loved it. I've also always been a fan of Pat Mills Marshall Law so I can't help but think that Savage must be the best thing ever produced.

I just got my copy of the second printing of issue #7. I have your book on pre-order with my LCS, but he dropped the ball with 7. From what it sounds like someone above him dropped the ball. Why are you guys publishing so few books that issue 7 (not 2 or 3) sells out of the publisher in 3 days??? However, this allowed me to read 7, 8 and 9 all at the same time. I wouldn't allow myself to skip an issue. I was so pumped, I re-read 1-6, and read all the letters. -
Some of your fans can be a real pain in the rear!

I've been collecting comics sporadically since I was a wee lad picking up TMNT and usagi yojimbo in the mid 80s. The TMNT sell out of the late 80s turned me off the genre for a spell. However, Dave McKean's Cages sporadic release dates kept me coming back to stores during this time. I usually got my fix with manga purchased at bookstores though. You may notice a theme between these books. None have color. I typically don't buy a book if it does have color.

What is wrong with a Black-and-White book? This is nothing to apologize for! It is a feature to be flaunted. A poorly published coloring job is awful, at best color muddies the art. There is something clean about true black and white. The gray tones you use affect mood and character. Your book is beautiful.

Other titles I have loved are: Now's terminator series (of which 'sara's slammers' has an odd connection with the day of the dead: post apocalyptic warriors living in missile silos in Florida with a strong female leader named sara - a good one to check out), Hex (dc's short lived post-apocalyptic biker/western), and Tank Girl. These were all, with various amounts of comic book silliness, about people - placed in a post-apocalyptic world. This is why I love your book so much.

While I am sorry to see Mr. Moore leave, Mr. Adlard and Mr. Rathburn's work is stellar. I didn't notice, at first read, the switch.

As to your fan's further harping about electricity, injured hands, comparisons to movies, continuity issues, etc... GET A LIFE! Has no one ever heard of the concept of the suspension of disbelief? This is a story about zombies in a comic book format! For pete's sake!

The narrative quality of the story causes me to suspend my disbelief. I am a slobbering fan boy - I will admit it. However, the quality of this title does force me to not notice such details. Upon the fifth or sixth read it

may come into my mind, but such matters are beyond this book.

You are doing an excellent job. So excellent that I have been inspired to write you. The first comic book I have ever written. Thank you for your stated devotion to this title. I have had difficulty keeping up the list of titles for my bag, as most everything I like is not only obscure, but they are always mini-series. Whether they mean to be or not. You publish on time - consistently well written and paced - and beautifully drawn comic book. What a rarity.

Congratulations on your Eisner Award nomination. You were robbed. I mean, Plastic Man?? come on!

steven walker

It's not that we're printing very little of these books. We've been printing THOUSANDS of extra copies of each issue and they've still been selling out. We're certainly not under printing this book to generate sellouts. We want to sell as many copies as we can. I don't think my readers need to "get a life" though... I welcome people writing in with continuity mistakes, and noticing that it doesn't snow that much in Atlanta. It makes me realize you people care, and that's a GOOD thing, in my opinion. Oh, and Plastic Man is a good title. I would have preferred losing to Sleeper (or y'know... Invincible) but Kyle Baker is talented as all get out and he deserved the award.

re: Walking Dead 9 and Spiderman UL 4

Mistah Kirkman:

These two titles demonstrate a whole lot of range on your part. With Walking Dead, you've got horror, and lots of it. That was unbelievable. You've solidified the idea that anything can happen with this book, that there are no sacred boundaries, which is the most critical element to any horror story. And with Spidey Unlimited, a short & simple story about a guy that finds true love. The neat thing was you had me wondering which girl it was with until the last page. Great job on both fronts, Robert! Odds are I'll see you in Chicago this weekend. Later!

Sincerely,
Ryan Walsh

Thanks for the kind words, Ryan. Between you and Stornio who needs that Chris Piers clown?

First I want to say what an amazing comic this is. I had been told about it over and over again and finally just gave in and bought it at #7. I don't regret it and even managed to hunt out first prints of all the back issues (expensive, but worth it). Just an amazing series that I hope doesn't end anytime soon.

Anyway, on to my question: Is there a possibility of any of the covers to be turned into posters of some sort? Some of these are absolutely gorgeous and I'd love to get a larger version. #6 in particular.

Thanks,
Tony

Jeez, Tony... if you want me to print posters of the cover you could just ASK, you don't have to write me a letter. Sheesh. We have no plans for posters at the moment but we'll see, maybe sometime down the line.

Dear Robert "Can I call you Bob?" Kirkman,

I recently enjoyed issue 9 (a big pat on the back to Tony for his most impressive cover of the series). I was thrilled to see your affirmation that the book stands a strong chance of really going the distance. The content of the issue, however, got me a thinkin' (as certain things sometimes do). See, I figured this might be a turning point for the gang, where they establish a more permanent home base for themselves. Instead, they were run out of town with extreme prejudice, courtesy of the Zombietown neighbourhood watch. I certainly don't mind unexpected twists such as this, but by the end of the book, the plot twists again like it's twisted so many times before: an established character is offed, and we see potential new additions on the horizon. Issue 9 was almost a chance for the story to evolve to the next step, and it really felt like it was time for something like that to happen, but at the end we're back to square one. Granted, the story is far from stale and there are several more issues available for progress and change to occur.

I am simply curious as to how long the narrative can remain fresh by relying on character recycling as the sole plot device. I'm not one to criticize - just wondered what your thoughts were on that. This raises a larger issue as well. As many times as you've said you want the book to hit 75+ issues, you've also stated your intention to never reveal the source of the zombies. I am aware of your reasoning on this and it makes a lot of sense. I wonder if these two goals are compatible, however. It is my understanding that the purpose of the book is to take a very protracted look at the existence of the characters post-zombieinducingdisaster, and also to be as realistic as possible. Clearly, realistically, survival would be the first goal of people in this situation. That is what the book is currently dealing with. Once that need is met however, what realistically comes next? Will the characters be satisfied with meager survival and no hope of anything more? Logically, people in this situation would want to understand the problem, and possibly look into solving it. This is because, as evidenced by droves of depressed retirees, people require purpose to be happy, much like a good story requires purpose in order to remain good. When it comes to this point, what will The Walking Dead do to give purpose to the characters and to the story, given that discussion of the zombie thing is off limits? It's probably tough to pull out an answer for that at this point, but at any rate, I just wanted to let you know that you've got me thinking about your comic book more than I think about most novels I read.

Chris Folkins
Toronto, Canada

Think about how different the first six issues have been to the current arc. This book is evolving. I'm just taking my time in these issues and having fun with it. This is not going to be a "find someplace save-kill a character-move on" book. You will be a very happy man by the end of issue 12. I have big plans for this book and I promise you it will be fresh and exciting all the way up to issue 75, then I'll run out of ideas and throw aliens into the mix... I believe that's referred to as "jumping the shark."

Letter Hacks,

Hell, that Piers guy writes all the time, I might as well too. I love this letter column. With all your exposure over at Wizard and Newsarama, exclusive (well, semi-exclusive) deal with Marvel, and growing list of books a month, you're going to get too good/busy for us and this column will be reduced to one page of gushing fans saying you're great.

Is this book going to get around to explaining the zombie apocalypse, or do you kinda figure we are all familiar with Romero and sort of know what the hell is going on? Of course, you won't give it away here, but are you planning to reveal some sort of catalyst for the change like a Venus probe, or can we leave it to genetic experiments, feminism, and voodoo mysticism?

I think we all like the direction of the book or at least the fact that there is a direction. I can't believe you killed Donna! Worse, I can't believe I didn't see that coming! It's getting clearer now that nobody but our main protagonist and his wife are safe for now. I would have included Carl but you shot him. Didn't see that coming either. Damn Kirkman, you've managed to write a non-predictable zombie story, way to go.

And hey, Piers got his NFL guy, can I be a zombie?!? Blow my head off and make me wear a nametag or something to identify me. Come on Charlie, help me out! I can't afford to fly down and be an extra for Romero.

Chris Pitts

Never fear... this letters column will always be ridiculously long and boring as all hell. No, I've mentioned it before, I DO NOT plan to EVER reveal what happened to bring the dead back to life in this book. Now, if that pisses a ton of you off... I'll change my mind. No you cannot be a zombie.

YEAH!

The book is great! I have already read all 8 issues and I'm still curious what's happening. Now I want to buy all two TPB's. The psychology aspect in this comics book is marvelous! Very special thanks to writer for that! I wish you good luck!

@Blackrooster

Bloody greetings from zombie fan from Poland! Keep the faith guys!

Thanks.

Dear Mr. Kirkman (or Robert if you prefer),

Congratulations. You have created a comic that is perfect in nearly every way, a success that few comic book writers can achieve. But after reading the letters column in the back of the comic I noticed that there were a few questions that haven't been asked (and forgive me if they have because I may have missed a few).

1. When you were a child did you read comics? If so what was you're favorite?
2. What made you decide to write comics in the first place?

The next questions aren't concerning you personally but what you are doing over the next few months and such?

3. On September 11 and 12 there is a comic convention in Baltimore that you are going to be attending. Will you there all day both days? And will you be signing while you are there?

4. What comics are you most looking forward to over the next few months?

5. Finally, because you are writing a comic about zombies yourself I can't help but ask if you are at all looking forward to "Toe Tags" by George Romero?

Thank you for your time and keep up the great work.

Sincerely,
Tyler S.

1. I started reading comics regularly in sixth grade. I read most of the Marvel Comics line before following all the Image guys over to Image when I was in eighth grade. McFarlane/Larsen's Spider-Man ranked as my favorite at the time, but I LOVED me some X-Force back in the day as well.

2. I wanted to do something in comics the minute I learned people did that for a living. I originally wanted to be an artist, but I suck... and I'm fairly competent at this writing stuff, and to be honest, I think it's more fun.

3. By the time this sees print I will have already returned from the Baltimore con. I shared a large table with my buddies Frank Cho and Scott Kurtz and hopefully I got to meet a few folks and get rid of some of these boxes of comics I have cluttering up my studio here at the house.

4. Shit if I know. Powers... Hawaiian Dick... Savage Dragon... Plantetary... Avengers... I read SOOOO many books.

5. Oh, yeah. I can't wait. What I've seen of it looks great.

I was in my local comic book store a couple of months ago, pretending to buy Transformers comics for my six year old, when I noticed on the shelf above was one copy of "The Walking Dead", issue 7. Being a long-time zombie fan, I decided to give it a try, raced home, shoved Transformers Energon into my son's hand (while he feebly protested, "I HAVE this issue!") and read through it quickly.

I immediately returned to the store and ordered the trade paperback, and put myself on the pre-order list for future issues.

Since I started with 7, I have absolute no quarrel with artwork. I like Moore's style, but I like Adlard's and Rathburn's work just as much. Probably more so, since it was my introduction to the series. So for me, the way the characters look from 7 on is how they're supposed to look, and adjusting the other way was difficult. But not impossible, she says, narrowly eyeing several people she knows who gripe like whiny old ladies about the "shock" and "trauma" of the infamous artwork transition.

People move on for one reason or another in all industries. It's part of life. You keep your stories coming and find good people to illustrate, and I'll keep reading. In fact, if by some horrible circumstance you find yourself without an artist, you can illustrate the story with stick figures and I'll still buy it. Or you can send me the story treatment and after I read it, I'll generously draw the stick figures myself for free!

Plot twists: I can't believe you shot Carl! (she gasps, clutching her son to her bosom). Donna, I suspected that was coming. Of course you had to show she's really a sweet person first, so it would that much more excruciating. I think Carol and Tyreese make a nice couple, but I like Glenn, too. So, please get him with somebody or have he, Carol and Tyreese come to some sort of "arrangement", if you catch my drift. I mean, damn, if Dale can score, why not Glenn?

Sorry this got so seamy, but you started it with Shane and Lori!

Stay busy...
Alison Smith

You'll be happy to see Glenn scoring in this very issue. Go Glenn. I hope you're happy, Allison. Oh, and just in case you didn't notice, Carl's fine! Wooooooo!!!

And with that, I bring another ridiculously long and boring letters column to a close. I hope you folks enjoyed it. See you in a couple weeks if all goes according to plan!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hello all, Sina Grace here.

Wow, what a way to end Charlie Adlard's twelfth issue as *The Walking Dead* artist. The great thing about revisiting this series week-in and week-out is watching his style evolve over the course of 75+ issues! Weekly!

Issue 18--the one that got away from me. This was a weird one. The way I write these things is in steps. I kick stuff around in my head for months jotting down notes here and there, then I sit down and I write a plot on paper--then I use that plot as a guideline while I type this sucker up in script form. Well, my plot for this issue and the script for this issue are almost entirely different. I had a major development planned for this issue, but the characters informed me they weren't ready--then Maggie wouldn't let me hang Hershel, then Dexter and Andrew wouldn't leave without a fight. It's hard to explain--I had things planned out--but as I typed the dialogue things changed, the characters took over and things went in other directions. It was kind of scary.

I hope it turned out okay. At least it looks pretty.

This wraps up the "Safety Behind Bars" arc and ends it with a cliffhanger (tee hee). Starting next month--more of the same!

Oh, and our letters page will be cut short this month to make room for the much requested character pages that will follow this letters page. HOORAY. Speaking of letters:

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I am becoming more impressed with your ability to develop characters than I thought possible.

The bitterness between Rick and Lori adds even more tension to an already fragile situation and makes Lori a bit of an antagonist. I'm anxious to see how serious she was when she said, "I'm sick of him." I also found it poignant that Rick felt the need to reconcile with Shane. In every zombie/apocalypse story I've always wanted as much detail as possible, especially what was going through the minds of the individuals and that would motivate them.

Regarding motivation, what have you got against poor Hershel? His kids are getting whacked left and right. You're for guns right? And since Hershel is anti-gun you're making his life even more miserable. That's fine by me. I'd rather have a gun and not need it, than...you get the picture.

It's an interesting "who-dunnit" you've added as well. It's a matter of who knew where the barber-shop was and when they knew it. Inmates are first up obviously. And I'd mention the other character's by name, but they escape me. In time though, I'm sure the more you develop them (rather than whacking them left and right) I'll remember them as easily as Rick, Lori, and Hershel. Now that this is my second letter, I'll return to comic-book letter format, with questions.

1) Communication. Hasn't anyone at that prison thought of checking out a radio/transmitter to try to find out

what's going on in the rest of the world? Electricity is the only thing holding them back. Nearly all modern prisons have on-line access even.

2) Is Rick planning on returning to his hometown to invite the man and his son to come back with him? I thought that was the first place he would head after going and getting Hershel and his family.

3) Everyone has been asking for one-shots to add to the back story. Have you considered introducing a new character by first starting with their back story (i.e. from the moment "all hell broke loose/to the present")?

4) Television. I'm sure you've seen the previews for "Sin City" and "A Scanner Darkly," or even seen "Sky Captain..." If you had final say on design for a television series based on TWD would you prefer those styles of "live-action" animation, or simply black & white & greys?

I'm really starting to enjoy the greys as much as the penciling. Too bad I can't remember the guys name who does that (I'm not typing this at home). But give him credit anyway.

Sincerely,
Merl Key

1) The haven't found a radio yet. Give them time. They really haven't had a chance to explore the prison at all.

2) It's a long way away--but it's not out of the question.

3) I don't really want to dilute the property with spin-offs. I'm not really into cashing in. Give me another month or so...

4) I'd prefer live action--it just seems more real.

Cliff appreciates the compliment, even though you forgot his name.

I've been reading *The Walking Dead* since issue 10. I bought the first trade and all other issues I could find to catch up.

I've been reading comics since 92' when I was 9, so I'm not going to lie to you and tell you this is first letter I wrote to a comic, but if it's printed or if I actually get a response than that will be a first for sure. (Though when I was 12 or possibly 13 I had it figured out, letters written to comic books go to the same place letters written to Santa go and haven't written a letter since.) I love the book, I really do, but I'm also not going to sit here and enumerate the reasons why, I think it would sully it somehow.

I will say that it is the reason I have a pull list at my comic book shop. Before this title came out I had no trouble getting an issue of anything, and now this sucker comes out and I have to get a pull list or else I'll miss an issue. Also, because of this book I've added *Invincible* and *Marvel Team-Up* to my pull list. My shop never seems to get *Brit*, but I'm dying to read it. I read an interview someone did with you (It was linked by Tycho and Gabe (I don't know their real name... that's right nested parenthesis... it's a code monkey geek thing) of *Penny-Arcade* after they met you at a convention in

Seattle.) and it sparked my interest in that book but I can't find it anywhere, which is depressing.

Brit isn't currently being published but the three books that have been out for a while are available for sale at www.khepri.com so they should be relatively easy to find.

I am quite shocked that no one has pointed out that you have the best letters column in all of comicdom. I'm pretty sure it's the best letters column in my entire history of reading comic books. It's amazing that you are able to publish and actually answer that many letters in a month. Reading all of those letters takes me forever, but I'm determined to do it every month. Between the letters and covers I'll never settle for another TPB.

That's the idea.

Don't ever do color. Never. I somehow managed to convince my art teacher to let me do an independent study where I draw a comic book. Nothing fancy, nothing I'm ever going to try and sell, just something I'll put up on my website just so I could say I did it. Anyway she asked me to bring in samples of B&W comic book art. I liked so I brought her Sin City and The Walking Dead. (Samples of both Moore and Adlard) She asked me what I liked about the Walking Dead, and I told her "I like that it's pretty... and has zombies... cause zombies rock." I tried to convince her she should read it but once I started explaining the storyline to her she just looked at me like I was weird... more so than she normally does, which when you are dealing with a hippie art teacher is really quite the accomplishment. Consequently - in case you were wondering - when she asked me what I liked about Sin City and I told her, "I like that it's not pretty."

In response to a letter I read in Issue 15:

See Simon Pegg isn't actually rich. When he writes you telling you that he's making millions and billions, well that's a desperate cry for help cause he's actually poor. You have to realize that when you take American dollars and convert them to British pounds a million American dollars is the equivalent of roughly 45 pounds or something. That's hardly enough to buy a video game. Poor guy. I hear he is supposedly making a sequel to Shaun of the Dead though so yay for that. I totally need to get a cricket bat now because of that movie.

Don't let his appearance fool you. That limey brit is RICH!

In response to a letter I read in Issue 16:

Bikers are good people, not all of them are alcoholics. From age 7 on up I would hang out with my uncle's biker gang and most of them wouldn't touch booze, so much so they had their monthly meetings at donut shops and drank coffee. He was in a biker gang comprised of Vietnam Vets, and trust me when I say these guys could survive an apocalypse. If they could survive a war I'm sure they could survive an apocalypse longer than most. I highly doubt they'd turn into dicks afterwards and start gutting people for no reason.

You've been duped. I'm telling you. That WASN'T coffer and those WEREN'T donuts. Show me a sober biker and I'll show you a leprechaun.

This might seem a little scatterbrained, but I'm trying to get a lot of ideas out here, I've been meaning to write you for a while but I think that's everything. You keep writing, I'll keep buying and reading.

- Jesse Mrozowski

So I'm responding INSIDE the letters now. BIG DEAL. The way Bendis does it in Powers makes the letters and responses really easy to follow. There's nothing wrong with copying his style. It works for Brubaker.

Hey Robert!

I know we've already talked several times but here's a formal note for your Letter Hacks column. TWD is, after all, my current favourite comic and has been since the first issue so it's about time I wrote in. First off, I should say on record that you've got one of the most solid stories about the living dead that I've read since Matheson's I Am Legend. High praise indeed but you've earned it because you've got an engaging story and then you have gore, in that order, something a great deal of

filmmakers and writers are sorely misunderstanding these days. And yes, I know I Am Legend is about vampires but it is the genesis of all modern zombie movies since George Romero has openly stated he stole the idea for Night of the Living Dead from Matheson's novel. It's about the dead coming back to life inexplicably and infecting and consuming the living, now let's move on.

So if Romero stole from Matheson and I'm stealing from Romero...that makes it okay... doesn't it?

Storytelling is all about character. I Am Legend is about Robert Neville. The undead are, of course, a massive part of it, but they are secondary to the one human element. Now, don't get me wrong, my license plate says ZOMBIES and I have a Day of the Dead tattoo sleeve on my entire right arm and I love gore more than the average person but zombie tales are, ahem, brainless unless you care about the characters. In fact, there was an entire issue without any zombie action at all and I daresay anyone even noticed; that's the sign of a solid story. This would also be the difference between Romero's Dawn of the Dead and Snyder's MTV-style, undead epileptic flit of a remake. The latter boasts too many one-line-spouting fist-magnets that no one could give a fuck about whereas, in Romero's flick, the audience genuinely freaked when Roger got his leg chomped climbing into the truck with Peter, for example.

Your book succeeds where Snyder's movie didn't in my opinion, it manages to introduce new characters frequently, but you seem to always understand their purpose. Or maybe you don't and figure it out as you go along, but nevertheless, no characters are ever wasted. (**I think you're forgetting Rachel and Susie**) And when they are, they're wasted in style! (**oh, never mind**) I should say, whoever this slasher is that's decapitating little girls in your comic at the moment echoes another brand of horror beyond the zombie sub-genre and, quite frankly, I'm surprised and very pleased about it. In a world that's overrun by monsters, they're trapped inside with the human variety - the most unsettling kind. Very nice.

My point is, your book is never predictable and more fun than any zombie movie I've seen since Day of the Dead, and that's saying a lot, since the competition's been heavy and Day of the Dead is the Mount Rushmore of zombie flicks. In short, Right. The. Fuck. On.

Love and buckets of blood,

Jovanka (Jen) Vuckovic
Managing Editor
RUE MORGUE MAGAZINE

Good to hear from you, Jen. I've gotta say I disagree. I think Shaun of the Dead is the most fun, entertaining, and compelling zombie ANYTHING since Day of the Dead. Although, I think you may be a bit more of an expert on the subject, so what do I know?

Hi bob

You sly gosse! After reading the end of Walking Dead 16 it surprised me that Thomas WAS the murderer, I thought it would have been too obvious for it to be him but there it was. I also suspected Dale since he decapitated a zombie with an axe in issue 3 and lost his wife before he was introduced but he looks to be just what he is a generous elderly old man.

It's good that you have no plans to show any origin to the plague because that is besides the point, the point should always be story and characters it would be good to hear their theories though its likely they'd asked why in the beginning.

I am really pleased you made it clear that ALL deceased with brain matter turn into zombies, thanks to Resident Evil, 28 Days Later and Dawn Remake people always assume its a infectious plague passed on by bites. I think it starts out where all the dead rise and then months or years later, the zombies still exist, their bites still turn you but the dead stay as good old inanimate corpses.

Dan

See, I was right--it was so obvious... I fooled you. Sigh. I'll try harder next time--I promise.

Man!

It's fun to be following a monthly book again. I haven't had any comics to look forward to on a regular basis since I was maybe 14. So you had to go and make it the accountant. I had my heart set on some vicious serial-killer type hiding out in another wing of the prison just collecting zombie heads for company. Oh well. Please please please, when the bandits or other living bad-guys or whoever (bikers are kind of played out, though) show up, give them weird zombie-body-part trophies. Like necklaces of animate heads. That would be fucked up. Talk to Adlard about it. I wanna see him draw that. Speaking of Adlard, the last page of issue 15 was one of the single most affecting images in the series so far, as good as the panel where Rick and Glenn go into Atlanta and encounter all those zombies piled around the tank. I remember his X-Files work. He's gotten incredible. So some quick, conveniently numbered suggestions for how you should be doing your job (besides the above):-

1. Can we see a zombie Donna? Or is there enough of her left?
2. Child Zombies. I think I saw one in #16, but it could've been a midget...
3. Give Carl more opportunities to use his gun. He's a good shot.
4. Seriously, the popular demand seems to be mounting. Have the guys loot an abandoned Wal-Mart.
5. Kill off somebody important soon. In the shittiest way possible. I mean it. Make us all cry.

Thanks for the legitimate reason to start hanging around comic shops again.

Ian Dennis,

1. This isn't the kind of book where dead characters keep popping up as zombies. Who KNOWS what happened to Donna...or Jim. I'd rather not see them again.
2. They're around... you just have to keep an eye out for them.
3. That kid's just lucky. He'll be shooting his gun again, eventually.
4. We'll see.
5. Tyreese falls in the Sarlac pit next issue, promise.

Dear Funk Gang,

I climbed on board the walking dead bandwagon with issue # 8. Now that I am up to issue # 16, it's still great to be on board. Great artwork, covers, and stories in them all!

I would like to talk briefly about the covers by Tony Moore. From an artistic point-of-view, I feel that issues 8, 9, and 16 are the best so far. Issue #8; You show us the effect of ice and snow on zombies. I cannot recall any media, including movies and comics, that deals with this area. Very nice thoughts! By the way, the simple, open design of this cover caught my eye on the comic rack. Issue #9: A reflection in a zombie eye-beautiful idea! The eye is scratched, glazed over, covered with decay and a big fly...yummy! It looks like Rick is getting sneaked up from behind by this zombie. Issue # 16: Best illustration of zombies...period! I noticed something usually forgotten in Zombie drawings. The fingers, fingernails, teeth, mouth, and upper shirt are covered in a brownish, reddish color. This means they found some previously "alive" folk sometime in the past to munch on...nice inclusion. The rest of their bodies are done well with pale blue skin and pale eyes. I loved the details of flies swarming them too.

As far as the artwork inside (by Charlie)...wonderful! Charlie's work in issue #16 is showing some new twists. More facial expressions, viewpoints, and even more contrasts. He is really starting to find his niche and personalize these characters. I love it.

As far as Thomas Richards being the, um, "head-cutter" in #16...no surprise there Robert. It's always the quiet, polite ones, ain't it? He wasn't in prison for tax fraud was he...probably more like serial killing? Just goes to show Rick's gang probably should do a more thorough background check next time before staying with a new group.

Let's hope...

I always get worried that the stories will get boring and I will lose interest in buying new ones. This has almost happened a few times. The group starts talking (blah,blah,blah), the group gets angry at each

other (blah,blah,blah!), someone gets killed (ho-hum). Some new ideas come in though to keep me reading... yeah! In short, keep up the good work. Okay....now for some interesting thoughts:

1. Even if zombies could happen, rigormortis (which is where the blood pools up in the lowest part of the body after death because it no longer pumps through the body's system) would set in. This means the muscles would seize up and eventually lose all mobility. Sorry guys...no moving zombie is possible.

1. You can't pick and choose what's realistic and what's not. In my book once the dead is up and walking, it's all thrown out the window. Who KNOWS how that works. Rigormortis doesn't seem to be a problem.

2. When you get to issue # 75 and start to write in the purple aliens with laser beams, don't forget the other nice suggestions: A. Talking Owls B. Invincible "crossovers" C. Tyreese flying like a helicopter In fact, put them all in a wrestling ring "death match" with a tag team of zombies. My money is on the talking owls....that would be a "hoot" if they win.

2. A "hoot!" GROAN! Actually, I think the suggestion was Tyreese FLYING a helicopter, but seeing him fly LIKE a helicopter seems much more interesting. I am counting the days until issue 75.

3. I guess I am the only one who bought the "Dawn of the Dead" remake. Zombie's that run? Zombie's that climb and jump? Zombies that increase in population to thousands and thousands? Now that's really scary! C'mon, admit it...you guys feel these new zombies would upset your "fantasy world". No more walking around and shooting slow witted zombies and raiding shopping malls at leisure. Too bad!

Till the next zombie attack....
Tracy Kent

3. You don't have a chance with running zombies. It's better if the hero has a chance. I don't HATE running zombies, I just prefer the slow ones. Besides, how would they move that well with rigormortis and all that?

Dear Robert,

Well, first we get the general praise out of the way. I jumped on board with the first two trades (bought them both together, thanks to their fabulously low price), and I've bought every issue since. It has bumped Ex Machina from my favorite slot, and has inserted itself firmly into my all time favorite list. Every issue I've read has evoked a strong emotional response from me, something that is becoming increasingly rare across all forms of storytelling. Your dialogue is masterful, and "sounds" very real.

Now, on to more specific praise. Issue #16, while not my favorite (issue #14 holds that honor), was still absolutely fantastic. I was happy beyond words to see that Tyreese survived, and his speech about his daughter nearly brought a tear to my eye. I was also "pleased" to see that I had guessed the identity of the decapitator correctly. (COME ON, who DIDN'T?) I knew that creepy Thomas was up to no good the moment I laid eyes on him. I guess I should be used to these heart stopping cliffhangers by now, but they keep catching me off guard.

Special kudos to you for your excellent characterization. Most people will list Tyreese or Rick as their favorites, but mine go a little more offbeat. My faves are Carl and Sophia. The scene where Sophia asks Carl to be her boyfriend was so cute it made me physically weak.

I bet you like Disney movies too, don't you?

Please keep up the great book, I'll buy it for as long as you keep cranking them out.

-Brian Clark
Chicago, IL

P.S. - Lighten up on Herschel, will you? You've been a real son a bitch to him.

Hershel's almost out of kids, so one way or another he's bound to stop losing them y'know? I think things will be looking up for Hershel real soon, but

that's probably a lie.

Dear Letter Hacks,

I was out of the comic book world for about 10 years until I picked up Wizard Magazine 160 and read their article on TWD. That weekend, I made the trip into town to see if the local comics store had any issues. The kid behind the counter handed me both the paper trades. I read them both that night, fell in love with the story, the art and the characters. Later that week, I read them again at work. I proceeded to go back to the store, bought issue 14, ordered 13 and signed up to have the book pulled for me when they come out.

I can honestly say that I am hooked and find myself wondering what will happen next. I have my roommate hooked and even the girlfriend is reading the book now.

The art in this book is like none I have ever experienced before. When the action hits I find myself reading faster. When the book slows, I read slower. I can really make a connection.

One thing I don't understand is why Hershel is getting such a hard time from your readers? There the guy is, on his own property, wife gone, an undead son in the barn, 10 mouths to feed, a limited amount of food and his not so bright neighbor shoots some kid. He did what was morally right in the situation and saved his life. He even allowed a group of very hungry strangers stay on his property, feeding them, and keeping them relatively safe while the boy healed up. Then they have a zombie wander by and the hotshot cop wants to kill it while Hershel believes that it can be saved. The man proceeds to lose two more of his kids and if that's not enough the hotshot cop thinks he's a permanent resident and start making demands to just move in on the food and family that Hershel has obviously worked his whole life to attain.

See, Hershel's not a bad guy. I think he's got more than enough reader sympathy these days, though.

I really felt for the guy and never thought that Rick and his group were welcome the whole time. Why they thought they were, seemed a bit selfish.

I like how Hershel managed to bounce back mentally, apologize to Rick and decided to come to the prison with everyone. He even starts to work on the soil to plant food to feed everyone. Then the guy loses two more children. I'm surprised the poor guy hasn't snapped yet! I love the Hershel character, he seems like one of the more realistic of the bunch, I hope he's around for a while. Someone has to think long term and he knows how to grow food, I hope the others realize this.

A couple questions...

1) Why doesn't anyone seem to think about using propane grills? We always see people building a fire to cook their food or just not cooking at all. Propane grills and propane should be easy to find and it's a great way to cook. You'd think that there would have been one on the camper...

Dale was all out of propane and they haven't been able to find more.

2) Why don't we see people reading more educational books? I know that if I were in the situation I would be trying to find as much information as I could that may come in useful. Survival guides, farming, delivering a baby, first aid, etc.

They haven't found a bookstore yet--if only the prison had a library...

3) Are they going to make and ammo run anytime soon? When Rick and Glen made their run into Atlanta, they filled up a shopping cart and had to ditch that. How many guns and how much ammo could they really carry while running for their lives? Then they had to teach everyone how to shoot, which would have eaten up all kinds of ammo. You touched on this after they cleared their way into prison, but they have got to be almost out of bullets.

Keep up the great work!

Thanks,
Mike Ginman

3) They are, in fact, almost out of bullets, which I think has been mentioned a couple times by now. Although, if you're recall, Glenn and Rick made it out of Atlanta with most of the ammo they took.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

I just got into comics last year, when I picked up some trades on a whim. I heard a lot of great things about the Walking Dead, and ended up buying the first two trades in December. I inhaled them, and have been reading the individual issues since 13, anxiously awaiting my next fix. You had me worried with issue 15, leaving me hanging on the fate of my favorite character, Tyreese. Thankfully you gave him the coolest moment so far in the series when Rick finds him in issue 16. I was a little disappointed that you revealed the killer so soon, I was looking forward to the tension building as more people are dying and accusations are flying. However I'm completely confident that the direction you're taking the story will be far more exciting.

Like many other fans I was a little disappointed in Charlie Adlard's replacement of Tony Moore. At first glance Adlard's art seems simpler and duller. However over these past 10 issues with Adlard on board, I have come to really appreciate his storytelling abilities. Take for example issue 14, bottom half of page 4, where the inmates are confessing their crimes. With these four panels Adlard is able to fully convey each of the inmates' personalities. In fact the way he draws their eyes pretty much sums them up. That is talent.

I have a couple of questions on the series, hopefully they haven't already been asked:

1. Any chance of Adlard, Rathburn, or Moore making an appearance in Letter Hacks, commenting on and answering questions related to the art?

These things are done so last minute it would be impossible to grab them on a whim, but if there were ever a specific question for them I'd probably hunt them down for an answer.

2. How much of what you have planned for the characters and story do you share with your artists? Are they finding out as they receive your scripts, or do you tell them everything you have planned?

I chat with Charlie and Cliff on the phone about the grand scheme of things from time to time. They know most of the big stuff that's going to happen. Most of the little stuff that happens in the issues isn't even known to me until I finish the script so they're not kept in the dark very long.

3. Which deceased character would you most like to still be able to write about?

Isaac Milton

I have no regrets. I liked Jim a lot, but hey... it was his time to go.

And that's it for letters folks! I hope you're happy, because I finally sat down and made those goddamn character sheets for you. Now you can totally look at characters faces and see their names under them. I probably won't be running this every issue, because taking up six pages in every issue with this seems kinda stupid, but we'll be running updated versions from time to time. ENJOY!

See you next month!

-Robert

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

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OR

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Big news time here at The Walking Dead Central. The Eisners were very kind to us this year. The book received not one but two nominations. One to Charlie Adlard as best penciler/inker and one to Tony Moore for best cover artist. These guys bust their humps all year long and both really deserve these nominations, congrats, guys.

In other news, I've been trying to keep a lid on this, because, well, I got letters about it... complaining, but I just got numbers and we're still going up, we haven't stopped going up... this book just keeps selling better. As I stated before I don't say this to brag, I just say this because I know, the only readers that actually read this, care, you guys like the book. I figure you guys would like to know that the book you enjoy is on solid ground. So I just wanted to let you know. Now back to your regularly scheduled program.

Oh, and before I start into the mail I gotta say, I recently signed up for "Blockbuster Online" the mail order DVD rental thing... and it's totally sweet! As a guy who really doesn't think to highly of leaving the house the future sure is turning out pretty cool. Between khepri.com, Amazon.com, Ebay, and this... and my wife buying groceries... I almost never need to leave the house. I'm a shut in! WOO!

Letters? Yeah, sure-we'll answer some of those... let's go.

Dear Dead Crew,

Wow! What else can you possibly throw at us? (I probably shouldn't have asked that)

Your book has the best characterizations that I've read in a long time. Characters are what give every great comic, novel and film staying power, something you can read or watch over and over again. Like with Romero's Dawn of the Dead, all the fans will tell you they watched it a hundred times because of Peter, Roger, Flyboy, and Fran. People actually cared what happened to them, and because it kicks ass all over today's cardboard cutouts. I read the Walking Dead every month anticipating what is going to happen to Rick and the Gang every month. Rick is definitely the headliner, but without everyone else the book wouldn't be as exciting, compelling nor as interesting. Hell, with the good writing you could put a chimp in the lead role and still sell crazy amounts of the book. Your characters are worth remembering.

I have just a few questions for you guys,

- 1.) What books inspire you guys to get into comics?
- 2.) Who is your favorite Romero actor?
- 3.) Any good convention horror stories?

Robert- keep up the awesome writing, and I love reading Letter Hacks, don't ever get rid of em'.

Charlie- top of the line, you bring the writing to life(or dead)

Tony-BAD ASS Covers!

Thanks putting out a quality book,

Gary Timmons

Bear
Lake, MI

Thanks for the letter, Gary.

- 1.) Charlie's busy, but for me it was Savage Dragon, hands down. I mean all comics in general helped but if I had to pick one... It'd be Dragon. That's just a GREAT comic book. And fuck that guy for become publisher of Image so I look like a kiss up when I say that.
- 2.) Duane Jones, from Night of the Living Dead... followed closely by Ken Foree, and an honorable mention goes to Tony Todd for the Night of the Living Dead 1990 remake.
- 3.) Nah, nothing crazy's every happened to me.

Kirkman and Letter Hacks,

First, let me get past the obligatory cliché of longtime reader, first time writer. I was a kid when I first saw the original Dawn of the Dead, and I've been a zombie fan ever since. I've never cared for the zombies that ask you if they can eat your brains, so those movies never did much for me, and there's been somewhat of a hole where that genre should've been in my life. I somewhat enjoyed the new Dawn of the Dead, as well as 28 Days Later, but still couldn't get past how bodies that were decomposing could pull off a full sprint. That's where TWD comes in. I gave it a chance with issue #1, and I've gotten every issue and collection ever since. I love the idea of the 'zombie movie' never ending. TWD has been a shot of much needed fun, and I've since completed my DVD collection of zombie movies as well as The Zombie Survival Guide, all of which rest with my collection of TWD. Thank you for that.

A couple of questions - First off, What (or Who) exactly is in the prison freezer? With your past storylines, I can't seriously believe that it was just used as the crapper. It's been four issues since they sickly avoided opening that door, and the anticipation of that answer is killing me.

Oh, come on... sometimes a cigar is just a cigar. It was a crapper... they pooped in the freezer. There's just nothing more to it. Sorry.

Secondly, when will you do us all a favor and revive Marvel's Nova? It appears that you're somewhat of a fan, and I'm curious if you're interested in doing Nova correctly, and if you've considered approaching Marvel about it?

I dig Nova a lot and I'd love to do a Nova series some day. Right now though, Zeb Wells and Scottie Young have a New Warriors series going on that features the ol' human rocket. Check it out.

Aloha and keep up the great work,
Gordon Fernandez

P.S. - This is a work email address, so if this letter is printed, could you please omit the address? I'm not a

I still desperately need this job. :)

The address is omitted. Your job is safe. But really--you think your boss is reading this?

Oh captain my captain,

I am another of the "new to comics" people if you don't count the one I owned at 13. Well I am a little let down by the end of #16. Thomas was a dead give away as the killer. He looks like an older Jeffery Dahmer. Another thing is that if there are zombies outside the fence why don't the people stab them in the head with sharpened homemade weapons through the fence?

Well, that came up a couple issues later... see, my finger's on the pulse.

They are in a prison there has to be a shiv there somewhere. Also my other beef is with Charlie. Charlie is getting much better as the comic grows but it seems as if all the zombies are all bald guys. It is looking like a chrome dome convention.

Bah, Charlie's doing fine. Some zombie's are bald, but not all... take a look, you'll see tons of non-bald zombies.

All right I have beaten you up enough, time for the praise. I thank you and as well as a chorus of others. This is a terrific story. I look forward to this every month. I have even gotten two of my high school math students hooked on the Kirkman crack as I like to call it. I gave them a taste of TPB one and two and after told them they would have to get there own if they want more. I am following your model. You are also a shrewd businessman. You start with the prices low and when they are hooked then you got them where you want them. Then Rob, you do the letters column to stretch out the experience. You sure you didn't sell drugs in a past life. At the website I post www.allthingszombie.com you are the second most viewed thread on the site. Sorry Romero's "Land of the Dead" is number one. Many members join and yours is the thread they post.

Right now we are taking dibs on who is swinging in #18. I think it is a toss up between Hershel and Andrew. I call dibs on Hershel; the guy has lost five kids. He has got to be F&M%ed. Another member and I are making an index of people on The Walking Dead to help those confused by which character is which. If you want, take a look and tell us what you think. It is at awfulman.mine.nu/twd/

Well a letter wouldn't be complete without questions.

- 1) Are you wallowing in money from Paramount's *Invincible* book?
- 2) If there are so many rotten corpses running out there wouldn't the be a pandemic of flies around? (Feel free to cut his out if you want to use the idea)
- 3) There seem to be more and more scenes like Dale\Andrea, Lori\Carol, prison shower. Does death make them horny or is it me?

Sincerely,

Gary Skellington

- 1) Not really. I could always use more money.

2) Man, I know I've gotten this question before... there're flies out there... we'll see them.

- 3) It's... just... you.

Hello again, Kirkman,

I just read TWD 16, and you just keep making this book better and better! There's so much going on now, it's hard to keep it all

straight. Not that I'm complaining or anything...

I'm glad to see we're finally getting to learn about the convicts a bit. We've got the pervy one, the psycho one, and the two gay ones (one of which I'm sure will go straight again). You had me kind of lulled me into a sense of security about them until the end of last issue. I guess it's naive of me, but I got the feeling that

even though they were convicts, they wouldn't pose a big threat to the others. After all, in their current situation, what would they have to gain by killing off the few people that were remaining in the world? Now that we know Thomas is the one chopping heads off, I'm interested to find out what his motivation is. Does he think he'll benefit from what he's doing, or is he just mentally disturbed? Now that we know he's the attacker, I'm sure the rest of the cast will find out soon enough. I'm guessing Dexter, who everyone accused of killing Hershel's girls, will end up saving the day for the rest of them, building their trust in him, but maybe you'll surprise me.

Speaking of heads being chopped off, I have to commend Charlie on his art on page 3. I loved the subtle movement of the girls' eyes before they started trying to talk. That was just magnificent!

And Tyreese somehow survived?!? That was certainly unexpected. I certainly thought he wanted to die the way he ran right into the center of a roomful of zombies. I can't imagine how he survived. I know he's told Rick that he doesn't really know how he did it, but I'm hoping it'll come back to him, and we might get a chance to see it through a flashback or something. I think that would be a great scene to see!

Then, to top it all off, we get some sweet lesbo action! Is Lori going to cheat on Rick again, only with a woman this time?!? I know there wasn't much to it, but I still thought it was an interesting little scene to throw in there. I can't help but think there was a reason for it, and it's a precursor of things to come.

I also enjoyed the page toward the end where Tyreese explains to Rick how all of them are dead. I know you've explained in the letters page that the title doesn't refer to the zombies, but it was nice to see the characters recognizing the same thing within the story. Tyreese has a completely different attitude toward their situation than I thought he did when Julie died. It's nice to see him back and know that he has a firm grip on their reality.

Finally, in your letters page you said the characters are going to try to figure out how everyone is turning into zombies. I'm really looking forward to that! I can't wait to see what kinds of ideas they come up with and learn along with them what the "rules" are in your world.

The characters are going to learn the zombie "rules" as they go along but they'll never find out how... at least, that's the plan.

Thanks for another great read! Keep up the good work!

Jim Amato

PS - I'm interested in some of Charlie Adlard's original art. You said you could forward our e-mail to Charlie, so please send mine. I'd like to see what he's got available and how much it costs... I'm sure he's gotten lots of inquiries on it, so he may not have much left. Thanks!

If you want to buy Charlie's original art, email me the address above with "original art" in the subject. When they're at the bottom of a normal letter like this one... I won't see it until I put this letters column together. If you put that in the subject I'll forward the request right on to Charlie.

Dear Robert-

Your comic book "The walking dead" rocks! Its truly awesome!

But riddle me this...why isn't it mentioned on

the Image comics web site? And why aren't the ship dates mentioned anywhere? Bummer!

Dude, keep up the awesome work!

Jonz

I guess the Image site just sucks! Seriously though... there's some stuff on there some times... Including my message board, check it out.

Robert,
Charlie, Cliff... etc.

I just wanted to finally write to my favorite comic to say thanks. I have been waiting for a story like this for my entire zombie obsessed life. Let me get a few things out the way real quick before I get to the heart of the matter.

Robert: I was so pissed off when you "killed" Tyreese ONE ISSUE after you said you wouldn't be killing anybody off for awhile in Letter Hacks. Well I guess the joke was on me since you got exactly the reaction I am sure you were hoping for. Oh well, fool me once... well you know the rest.

HAHI! Got you.

Charlie: I have to admit that I didn't like your initial start on this book. It was quite a shock going from one style to another and that is one of my biggest beefs with most "mainstream" comics (who seem to switch artists every other month). Looking back at those issues now I can see just how hard you were trying to make the world come to life in your own way. I didn't notice all the little things going on in the background of many issues until I re-read them. Now I can honestly say that I really like your work and I hope you stick around for some time to come. Your zombies are great... gory, rotten, bloated, and horrid! Everything I need out of the walking dead!

Cliff: I don't think I have ever seen anyone give you the respect you deserve for your excellent work in gray. It gives the entire book a sense of depth, gloom, and despair that might otherwise be lacking without. Keep up the excellent addition to this already excellent comic and everything will be .. uhm .. excellent.

Now to my question. Since I know many intelligent zombie fans read this thing and I have yet to see any real discussion... this has to do with a Romero classic. My favorite of the trilogy (and maybe of all zombie films) is Day Of The Dead. It gets so many things right, especially in the characters it portrays. But while discussing the movie recently with a coworker we both stumbled on something. Romero likes to work in civil rights undertones in all of the Dead pictures, but we had a hard time figuring out what it was in Day Of The Dead. Then we realized it was the character of Pvt. Miguel. Everyone assumes he was dating or sleeping with Sarah in that movie, because they shared a room, but what if he was actually gay? Maybe that is why the rest of the men in the camp had such a distaste for him, and Sarah was smart enough to let him stay in her room as a disguise. At the end of the film we see him clutching his rosary beads and crucifix as he is torn apart by zombies who then destroy the remaining men alive in the complex. He was in so much denial and anguish over his homosexuality and it's sins against god that he finally gave himself over to his retribution. Sure this all seems a little out there, but so are a lot of things in the film. If you are still not convinced just think back to the scene where Miguel slaps Sarah across the face and says, "You bitch!!"

Y'know... most of the time when people do this they end up sounding like a real crackpot... but y'know... I think this kinda makes sense. I'm going to have to watch the movie again with this in mind. Thanks.

Well I hope it gives you something to think about if nothing else. Actually maybe you should just get back to work on creating this awesome comic for me to read every month. Leave it up to the fans and readers to argue about this one.

Randall Davis

Dear Robert:

Hi - huge zombie-aholic here. Although I've been a fan of comics for over 20 years now, I have never written in before. (Bullshit, of course you have... liar.) Your book has made me change that...I can't even begin to

explain the excitement I get from reading your book. I am happy to say that I have been a reader since issue #1 hit the rack and haven't had to go through too much torture of tracking down a back issue - that is until I went out to sea for a few months. Our Strike Group headed out in October and I was forced to wait around until March to see where TWD was going. Needless to say, it was well worth the wait...the newest storyline about the prison is your best stuff yet. The only good thing about being gone for 5 months is that I can get to read 4 issues all in one sitting.

I have to admit, when Rick went back to take out Shane (again), I thought he also might have it in mind to try and track down Morgan and Duane and getting the only other people he had met into the 'good life' of the prison...looks

like he's got other things to worry about now.

Keep up the great work and I'll be sure and do my part to spread the word to other comic readers...now if I can just get the comic book store folks to quit referring to me as 'the walking dead' guy...

v/r,
LT Allen Adkins, USN

Right on.

Letter Hacks,

This is the first time I've ever written to a comic. Well, except for all those other times. (see, that's what I'm talking about.)

You've established in Invincible that there are parallel Earths, right? And in Invincible's Earth, there's that bloke who looks like Richard E Grant's Doctor Who living in the sewers and animating corpses, with limited success. So it stands to reason that on one of the parallels, Richard E Grant is a bit more successful; to the point that he's managed to accidentally create a zombie apocalypse!

See? Total crackpot.

And you said that you'd never go into the cause of the zombie plague. The clues were there all the time! You cunning scamp, you!

Even though I've now resoundingly busted open the central mystery, I'm still loving the comic. It's truly a great read. One question though: the gang are worried about running out of ammo and weapons, but they're in a prison in the US. Surely there's going to be guns and ammo lying around all over the shop, or was this a fuzzy liberal prison in which the guards were only armed with stern words and good intentions? Surely the copper should have thought of this by now?

Oh, and have you thought about digest-sized collections? I know your books are around the same price as the manga collections anyway, but you might get some crossover success from the otaku. Plus it's fashionable, innit?

kelvin green

Eh, I don't really want to have two different kind of collections out there. Digest-sized trades are fine but I really like full-sized comics... I like to keep the format alive.

Hello Richard, I'm Phill and I love the series! I love how you take a bad situation and make it so much worse in the story. When are you going to make it to any Florida ComicCons? I would love to meet the man who brought us the comic fanboys one of the best zombie series that has hit the comic book shelves. You give me a reason to go and still buy comic titles. I'm not here to bash but I lost alot of respect for major comic companies such as Marvel and DC with some of their hair-brained ideas to spicen up some of their already existing titles. Anyways, you brought us a title we can build with and keeps us hungry for more. Good job and thank you for bringing me back to the world of comics,

Your Faithful read,
Phill

Florida, eh? My parents live down there... I'm sure I'll make it down there on an official capacity sooner or later. If any con promoters are reading this... EMAIL me.

Mr. Kirkman,

I thought it was about time I wrote to say just how much we think of your wonderful comic. My wife and I are avid readers of comics, collecting between 30 and 40 titles a month. Yours is one of the best, and you're in good company too. I'd rather chew my right hand off than pick between Rex Mundi, Y The last man, and Walking dead.

We didn't pick up right away. With reading so many books on our pull list already and past geek books never really panning out, we were skeptical. However all the new geek movies out (28 Days Later, Shaun Of The

Dead, and Dawn Of The Dead), reminded us of our love for the genre and we folded. I picked up the first trade and half way into the first issue I was hooked. After reading it through in one setting, I promptly handed it to my wife and suggested she stop whatever she was doing to read this book, ASAP. Since then we've gotten caught up, now reading monthly.

What zombie fan hasn't wondered what this kind of world would be like day in, day out? What zombie fan hasn't fantasized about their own world gone dead, you're main concern just staying alive, hour to hour? This excellent work takes us far beyond what any movie ever has, exploring a world of the dead in a way no other medium could. Well displayed is the uncertainty of such a world. We never know who's going to die from issued to issue. It's safe to say the majority of characters are fair game. I think you have a story to tell about Rick and he'll be around for a while, but I'm not all that certain you won't axe him, when his story plays out. The monthly cliffhangers are hell and we love them!

An interesting point to note is your willingness to print the names of and talk about other comics in your letter pages. Something most books will not do. I think this shows your love of comics and comfort level with your own work. BTW, kudos on your huge letters page as it's almost as fun to read as the book itself. Your dedication to not whoring your work by expansion simply for monetary gain is admirable as well.

Yeah, I hope you fuckers like this shit because I'm not even half way done and I've been doing this for over an hour. You bastards BETTER like these things.

Your hard work and imagination have earned you two more loyal readers. We're not going anywhere, we want to see how it ends (not too abruptly of course).

Well, enough ass kissing for one letter. Our best to you and your crew,

Chad & Venessa Cayler

No, no... more ass kissing, please.

Robert Kirkman.

Great comic, I've been reading since issue five, (Ordered issues 1-12 over amazon, each in Volumes, also currently ordered Vol.3 which goes from 13-18), and I say, so far it's pretty good, including the fact it's more than a mindless gun and run comic. But overall it's wonderful and keep it up. (Please don't kill Glenn :(for some reason he's Da bomb!).

I didn't kill him THIS issue? Is that enough?

Anyways the reason I'm actually contacting you is the fact how infection spreaded without bites or scratches on Chris and Julie also Hershel's two daughters and Shane. I managed to buy issues 15-16 (Couldn't wait for the damn Vol.3) and well a bit surprised at how the five died. I mean the so-called virus couldn't be airborne? So it has to be water borne, meaning some stupid zombie fell into a lake or major water reserve and contaminated it. Also animals, animals drinking the water itself must have

spreaded the infection when humans (Such as Shane) hunted and ate the animals (Deers, rabbits, etc.). I mean it dose seem logical besides one part, what prevents infection from happening? Why after death? I'm stumped on that part so far, but yet I could be wrong?

Man, this must be crackpot month.

Anyways, good luck on the series and rock on man.

P.S. If you can, add a bit more humor tho, I mean sometimes the comic feels a bit morbid with death happening twenty-four seven.

-Michael Slate

I'll see about making things a bit more funny. The letters columns are funny sometimes right? Sometimes?

Hey Robert,

At first I wanted to jump on the "I never wrote a letter to..."-train, but then I wrote a letter to Pigtale's Ovi so that I would be a "letter to the editor veteran"

writing to you. But hey let's talk about the book, I'm hooked up since #1 smiled at my in my favorite comic shop...I wasn't that long into comics by then and still had to find the right thing for me, since I'm not that much in to superheroes...and there was TWD, what a title sounded similar to half the movies of my dvd collection, so I bought it and that brought me here.

I finally found out yesterday what makes your book so special to me, that's why I write this letter...it's the same thing that made me fall in love with Joss Whedon's Buffy series. All the seasons deal with characters and how they live with their problems and each other, and as a gimmick there's a monster every episode and a bigger one at the end of the season, and that's how your book is to me. A great story about several people in a miserable situation dealing with their life... plus zombies. I totally love your characters and how unpredictable they sometimes are!

There is something about the letters you get I do not understand, why do people keep asking if we will learn more about this/than, and if we see more of Morgan and Duane? To me it's not knowing what happens next issue what makes me walk much faster home if I got a new TWD copy at the shop. Why would anybody know what happens before the new issue is published? But maybe that's just my problem.

Some people are weird... you read this letters column right?

So no questions from me this time.

Keep up the good work (charlie, cliff and tony too of course) that is done to craft one of my favorite books on the market.

Cheers Tilmo
Germany, Aachen

Thanks for the letter... um... Cheers.

Rob,

I had to wait a few extra weeks before I got my copy of Walking Dead #16 (my local comic shop, which I've since given up on, never got copies in and I just said, "what's up with that?"). It was worth the wait, and then some. I've written before, even been published before, so I don't even care about that (though it is a natural feather in my cap). I just needed to write and say while I love this series, and every issue gets better and better, that when Rick opened the door to the cell I had goosebumps. That is, in my ever so humble opinion, the greatest moment I've ever read in comic book history!

Thank you for that.
Mike Coughlin

Thanks.

Letter Hacks,

Woweeeee.

I just don't know where to begin with this letter. There is so much going on in your book right now! I was finally able to pick up the last two issues. The girly side of me wanted to crawl up in a corner and cry at the end of 16 but I was brought back to my senses at the very end of 17. Let's just say that I'm looking forward to Rick's promise of beating the murderer to death. And from the looks of the cover for 18- justice is definitely being served. At least I hope it's Thomas he's beating all to hell.

Speaking of the covers... Tony's work is more and more amazing every time a new issue comes out. I couldn't stop looking at 17's cover. There is so much detail to take in there. He's incredible with the coloring. Which is just enough. The rest of the book doesn't need it. The tones are perfect. If anything color would only take away from the true grit of this story. I'm glad you refuse to publish this in color, Robert.

I've never been so impressed with Charlie's work as I was in 17. He's really nailed it. The expressions, the action... each character has their own face. I just can't get enough of it. I take back any negative thing I've ever said about him. Charlie, if I could find my shoes I'd

eat
them both and smile while
doing so.

Cliff, your gray tones are as gorgeous as ever.

The fangirl in me is screaming and jumping for joy that Tyreese isn't dead. Scared me there for a minute! Lori is still pissing me off. Good job with that. I hope I wasn't that bitchy while I was pregnant. Carol kissing Lori really surprised me. Something tells me we haven't seen the end of that little moment. You better prepare yourself for some hate mail if Lori does anything to jeopardize Rick's dwindling sanity, Robert.

Who am I kidding? I'm no good at hate mail. ;)

Okay, I'm going to quit rambling on but I do want to ask one question. Where is Patricia? We didn't see any more of her after her little talk with Thomas. Man, I hope Andrea is okay!

Well, until tomorrow! You'll undoubtedly be receiving another email from me after reading 18.

Jenn Lee

By now you know exactly where Patricia is.

Hey there,
First off AWESOME BOOK GUYS. This is my first year reading comics. I always thought they sucked. But a friend of mine knows I am a huge zombie fan and told me about your books. So I bought the first TPB and read it. Then the next day got on Ebay and Bought Issues 1-8 and from then on I bought it every month. I just got issue 17 and I saw in the back you talking about posters. I WOULD BUY EVERY SINGLE ONE YOU PRINTED! Lol. Do it! POSTERS POSTER POSTERS!!!

Mail me a check and we'll talk. I am looking into posters, though... I'll keep you all, um... posted.

Dear Kirklan...I mean KirkMAN,

Still love the book! No "Atilla The Hun-gry", no "Charlie Manson is President", no "Dangerous Zombies in the last few issues"...

WTF Dude? Did you change your mind and decide and decide to do a comic adaptation of "OZ"? The black prisoners are going to stage an uprising??? Please don't do it, you and I both know real people are a lot more reasonable than that and it just seems cliché. Or is it your way of stroking HBO's ego to get a series out of them?

Maybe I just suck. That's not out of the realm of possibility.

That's it for complaints, but you should really sound those guys for a show! Use HBO's offices in Atlanta; utilize JPM Productions out of Atlanta for shooting and effects; shoot it just out side of Atlanta... It makes sense, trust me! I need a spooky fix from HBO now that "Carnivale" is done.

I wholeheartedly agree.

Now questions:

1) You're not going to make the book LESS talky just because some other fans don't like to read are you? That would suck AND hurt character development.

No, no... not at all. The book is what it is. There was just some action stuff to get out of the way. So it got a little less talking for a few issues. It should be back to its balloon filled majesty soon enough.

2) What conventions are you hitting this summer? If any of us track you down and pull a Marc Silvestri (ask him how he got into the biz) is that cool??

I know all about how Marc got in the biz and I think it's best if I dash your hopes now by saying I'm married... AND I'm not really into that. I'll be at San Diego and Baltimore for sure, and I'll probably hit Chicago also... but I'm not sure just yet (95% sure I'll be there).

3) How much longer are we going to have to sit in this boring assed prison? Get them the fuck on the road!!! You can't very well replenish your cast if they all die in prison, now can you?

Stick with It... you'll like what's coming. Sheesh... have a LITTLE faith.

4) Why don't you EVER pay homage to other horror classics? Name someone Barbara, or use the "kicks much ass for the lord" line in the book instead of the letters column.

I think some times that stuff distracts from the story. I did name that kid in the first issue Duane Jones. I'm sure you'll see a Barbara before too long.

5) Have you joined the Zombie Hunting Society yet? We know you want to!

Nope... I'm just too stinkin' busy!

Michael Riedlinger
ZS Reservist

Kirkman,

First off, I'm going to have to agree with some previous letters and say I definitely want a poster from this series. Any of the covers would be great, and issue 17 was one of my favorites. Also I'm glad to see that TWD is on a slightly less chaotic schedule. If anyone else gets tired of waiting for the next Walking Dead comic to come out, I did find the perfect solution...buy Invincible! Anyway, I was happy to see Thomas' face pounded into mush last issue. It's bad enough that they have to deal with the zombies. If only Rick had remembered that there really are no black serial killers, it's always the creepy looking white guy. Hopefully they don't throw him to the zombies though, you'd hate to give them more of a reason to hang around the prison. I'm thinking that in trying to get the riot gear, they're going to set a bunch of prisoner-zombies free.

Man... I just can't fool you guys these days can I? I'm going to have to try harder for the next few issues. You guys are really keeping me on my toes these days.

Well, thanks for the excellent stories and be sure to print my letter since it'll be a good invincible plug. There's no reason we all shouldn't be reading both comics (alright, I'll stop sucking up).

Andy Robak

Consider your letter printed Andy. And thanks for the Invincible plug. It's hard to cross-promote the two because they're such vastly different books, but if any of you out there like superhero comics, and since you're already reading a comic I'm sure there's a good chance some of you do, give Invincible a shot. If you don't like it... hey, you're only out three dollars.

Letter Hacks,

Better by the issue, an understatement, but pretty

true. I thought things were getting pretty heated with Hershel's kids getting offed & revisiting Shane, but the way Rick pummeled the hell out of Thomas was amazing! Charlie & Cliff did wonders with that double page spread, beautiful. Glad to see Glenn and the boys getting pretty creative with things, and Carl & Sophia going out; hope they don't fall into it too early...17 issue in and a hell of a ride so far.

1) How many different ways can you kill a zombie?

73

2) If you had to kill a zombie, how would you do it?

Magnets.

3) If the world was overrun with zombies, would you still write comic books?

Probably not. In fact, I can't think of a better reason to quit.

4) Do zombies even like comic books?

Do actors like the movies they're in?

5) Are there any zombie dogs and cats around? Can Carl have one?

No, there will be no zombie animals in this book.

6) What's the strangest zombie thing you know of?

Zombie toothpaste. Google it.

7) When can we expect zombie Kirkman, Moore, Adlard & Rathburn to show up?

That's already happened. You must have missed it.

-Mike Storniolo

Kirkman,

I just finished reading *Walking Dead* #17, and have been with you since #1, so I guess all of the praise and acclaim for the writing, art and book in general can be taken as read. This is, indisputably, my favorite book on the market. There.

I basically decided to write because of a couple of comments you made in your letters page in #17 that I wanted to respond to.

First you mentioned how lucky horror fans are to be alive now because of the massive number of horror movies being released these days. I completely agree with that (even though many of them are crap, that is the lot of horror fans to sift through the crap for the rare and precious bits of gold) except for the fact that it isn't really lucky. It's politics. Or maybe sociology is a better word. In times of great political/social strife, there is always a rise in the number of horror movies on display. For example: The beginnings of the Great Depression, gave us the Universal Horrors, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, etc. Post WWII we got a lot of radiation-nuclear monsters overrunning the earth type of movies and space age sci-fi horrors. In the 60s and 70s we had the racial tensions of the civil rights movement as well as Viet Nam, (protests, social anxiety and family unit meltdowns galore) which brought about such classics as *Night Of The Living Dead*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and many others. Of course the Cold War/Reagan/Nuclear Paranoia years was the era of dime-a-dozen slasher movies, most greatly exemplified by the Friday the 13th and *Nightmare on Elm Street* franchises. (For fear of getting too political it is prudent to point out that in the prosperous and reasonably peaceful Clinton years there were almost no new horror movies to be found.) So now, I believe we owe our current crop of sometimes brilliant horror to the tragedy of 9/11, the new war in the Middle East and our falling economy. (Is it an accident that *Amityville*, a film with a great deal of subtext dealing with the financial burdens of a young family just making their start, has been remade and released just as tensions about the war are beginning to wane and people are starting to worry about gas prices in excess of \$2.00 a gallon?) I think this would be a great thesis, that somebody should write an article, or maybe a book on. Not me though. I prefer to stick to fiction.

This all makes sense.

Which brings me to the other thing I wanted to say. (Sorry, this letter is getting a lot longer than I intended.) You also mentioned in the letters page that you would kill off Rick if a situation ever presented itself where you thought it would be interesting to do so, without doing damage to the greater story as it is meant to progress. Well, way back in your first story arc, there was a moment where I knew, if I was writing this book, Rick would have died. I think it was pretty good and I think you might find it an interesting alternate path for the book. It's nothing you can use, obviously, but you might find it interesting. Rick never would have made it out of Atlanta. He would have met Glenn there, and Glenn would have tried to rescue him, but just when you thought they were going to make it, Rick would have been killed. How, doesn't matter. We would then follow the surviving but possibly somewhat traumatised Glenn back to camp where the issue would end as we see him greeted by Shane, Lori and Carl, who we would recognize from Rick's flashbacks. Heartbreaking, no? The story would have then continued more or less as it has, but with Shane replacing Rick as our hero. This would have left readers with the absolute certainty that ANYONE could die, from the very beginning. Also, it would have left us at the end of the issue with a set of familiar leads which we would recognize from the first issue, who could carry the story forward without having to develop brand new leads to replace the one we lost. That would have been pretty cool, no? And tragic. Probably stronger than the happy family reunion ending, which I felt came a little too soon and a little too easily. But that's just my opinion, and I feel you've far more than made up for that one tiny misstep.

Misstep? Bah, I liked that scene. I think you've got a good

idea here, and it would have been cool, but the book needed an anchor for readers to latch on to. Killing off our focus that early could have alienated people. Plus, you'd miss all the cool thing's Rick's done sense. I did think about killing Rick in issue six instead of Shane, but again... decided against it. He'll die when I'm ready just like all the rest. You'll love it.

Anyway, you also said in that page that you'd like some more challenging letters to keep things fresh. Hopefully, this was one.

Keep them coming,

--Corby Daniel

PS: It freaked me out when you had those two little girls decapitated!! That took some fucking balls. I'm so glad I read this book!!

I got balls bigger'n Texas, baby!! You can see them from space. Just wait until next issue.

Zombiologists,

This one was dark from the get go. Even with the sex in the gym, the innocent kiss, and Dale's half-hearted attempts at reducing the numbers of the zombie horde (especially the mashed-into-the-fence bit...), the issue was just weighted down with pending menace. Maybe it's just the growing darkness of their reality. I'm not sure, but I do know I realized this issue was pivotal before I read your intro to the letters page.

Robert Kirkman, pointing out the obvious since 1978.

Also seems to me they may end up hanging the wrong man, at least for the murder of Hershel's girls. His dialogue was all wrong, not to mention the implement he chose for his assault would have been useless in removing a head. No, I think the girls died at the hands of someone much closer to them. MUCH closer.

Since when can you not cut a head off with a knife? A big, sharp, knife? True, it'd take a lot of cuts, but it could be done.

Of course I could be way off...

You just might be.

Somehow I missed the Lord of the Flies parallels, but,

now that I see them, I'm eager to see what you do with them. For all intents and purposes, they might as well be stranded on an island.

I'm losing my appreciation of the prison as a homestead. Maybe because its' symbolic weight is becoming a large part of the overall darkness of the work. Now that they are prisoners, seems they're likely to become emotional zombies themselves, feeding off of the building tensions that are inevitable in such stark, limited confines.

Stick with it. The prison is cool.

Can't say I shared your fondness for the art. For the first time I noticed Cliff's wonderful use of gray scaling far more than Charlie's art. The art was fine, it just felt off to me. Sorry, even as an artist I can't quite put my finger on what about it didn't work for me. Maybe it was that Charlie's anatomy seemed off more than usual. Sorry, can't figure it out.

To each is own, I suppose.

Looking forward to 18.

Thanks, guys, for a continually moving experience.

Later,
Chip

P.S. Could I suggest a roster with thumbnail portraits at the beginning or ending of each issue. I suck at names, and all I can remember is Rick and Lori's names. I have to hunt through the issues if characters aren't named in each issue.

Already done. How's that for service? It won't be in EVERY issue, but it'll be in most.

Greetings
yet again Deadheads(wait, that name's
already taken innit?)

Sadly, yes.

Anyway, issue 17. Pretty good stuff gentlemen. Loved the scene with Carl and Sophia. Oh and Rick beating the shit out of Thomas wasn't half bad either. Was that a tooth stuck in his hand? Nice.

That was a tooth, yes siree.

Oh, by the way, Sea of Red was pretty friggin cool. The art was very different than most the stuff out there and the story was pretty intriguing (though it kinda bugged me that Marco turned just from being bitten. But that's just nitpicking.) So thanks for the recommendation. I'll keep checkin' it out.

I'm trying to keep the back covers of this book as ads for books I highly recommend from Image. So if you see it on the back cover, I think it's going to be great. I pick each back cover with care... so don't think I'll advertise any old book back there.

One last thing. The poster is a fuckin SPLENDID idea. Make it. NOW DAMMIT!!!!!! And action figures too! With friggin kung-fu grip! Kung-fu grip and realistic head exploding action! Yeah, that's it. I'm so fucking brilliant.

I'll look into the action figures.

Well, I've rambled enough. Keep on doing that thing you do. And get to work on the action figures. Millions are at stake!

-Mike Capuano

I'm into millions... so don't worry, I'll check into it.

Mr. Kirkman (and co.),

I have to say that after finishing issue 17, I am just awe-struck. You have created such a vast, complex and detailed world in such a relatively short time. I cannot remember the last time anything besides a beautiful woman held my attention this long.

Dude... we're up there with BEAUTIFUL WOMEN?! We must be doing something right.

Keep up the fantastic work!! As far as the people that seem to be getting ready to bitch about the release schedule for these books, tell them to fuck off. The Walking Dead is like a fine meal. I've never walked into a 5 star restaurant and kicked in the kitchen door to make the chef hurry up my way with my filet mignon, so why the hell would I ask you to rush one damn bit past the pace that best allows you to tell this amazing story?

One completely hooked fan,
Mike Conners

Well, as far as the schedule goes we've hit another snag with Charlie having his second child (congrats mister Adlard). We're skipping the month of August in solicitations so we can keep up. We're a month behind so the book will still ship in August, but we'll be on time after that. I'm not going to play the "you can't rush greatness" card. I want this book to be dead-on monthly more than anyone, trust me. Thanks for the support, though.

HOLY SHIT, MAN!!!

Rick is going off the deep end real damn quick! When he went out to re-kill (I guess that works) Shane, I thought it was a little bit nutty. In issue 17, I've come to realize that he's just bugfuck insane! He beat the tar outta that guy, then he says that he wants to hang him for all to see what happens to people who break the law in this New World Order that he's concocted in his mind over the last five or six months? He's turning into some kind of whacked-out, Hitler-esque wannabe dictator of the remnants of the human race. And he was such a nice guy at first, too...

This book is messed up. This is one of the most human stories I have ever read. I started to pick it up because it was the first comic I'd ever seen on the shelf that was about zombies, and the crazy thing about it is that I almost don't give a rat's ass that there are zombies in it anymore! It ranks right up there with Ennis' Preacher, that one guy who's name I can't remember for some reason's Midnight Nation, and White Wolf Game Studio's Demon: The Fallen Trilogy, by

Greg Stoltz,
who must have sold his soul for deep
inside knowledge of all things demonic. TWD is now my #1
favorite.

Not just because of the story, either. You bitch about having so many letters in Letter Hacks sometimes, but there are a lot of books and movies out there I never would have heard of if some of those letters hadn't been printed. I picked up and read Reign of the Dead and RoTD: Apocalypse End, both of which are great, solely because people mentioned them in their letters. Admittedly, I was a little disappointed with the OVERLY MASSIVE amount of plugging that you did in #17, but I'm sure I'll be picking up a few of the non-Marvel titles you mentioned (sorry, I do love your writing, but I haven't read Marvel ever since that Maximum Clonage crap. It really killed them for me.)

Oh, come on... one minute you're telling me how great the letters column is for recommended reads and then you're complaining about me plugging some books? I'm telling you--there's a lot of good books out there. Give 'em a shot.

Anyway, like so many of your other readers, I have questions/ideas that will probably only get answered in round-about ways/not be used because they're not yours;

1) Kill Rick already. He deserves it. One of these nights, Lori should just feel pity for her husband because he's gone completely insane and blow his brains out in his sleep. Be nice about it, he still deserves a good, clean, quick, honorable death, not something horrific.

Man, you guys turn on people QUICK.

2) Is Tyreese hiding some plan of vengeance somewhere deep behind those eyes of his? I mean, he saw his daughter die, come back as a zombie, get re-killed by Rick, strangled Chris, waited until he came back so he could re-kill him, and plunged himself into a room full of zombies with nothing but a hammer, and lived through it all. Now he's all cheery and happy-go lucky (YATTA!), almost like he hasn't a care in the world.

Either he's gonna snap and kill Rick himself for some reason (it's always the quiet ones), or he's one tough, hardcore son-of-a-bitch. If I was one of the survivors, and he became our leader, right now I'd shit solid gold if he told me to.

Tyreese is mighty awesome. I'll just leave it at that.

3) I haven't heard hardly any mention of God or a higher power from any of the characters mouths, unless it was followed by dammit. Did any of them have any kind of religious beliefs before this zombie thing went down, and if so, how do they feel about it now? On the topic of religion, are there any crazy religious zealots out there, stockpiling armaments and destroying zombies by themselves or with groups? Or at the very least some bad-ass group of militant altar boys or something? Or preachers that believe this is God's will, and are trying to spread the word that mankind deserves a zombie plague for their sins (scratch that, enough people said you took the prison idea from Reign of the Dead, that would be too much)? Or groups of kids living all Lord of the Flies style?

Hershel is very religious. You'll be hearing more from him on the subject as time goes on. As for the other stuff... just keep reading.

4) Hasn't anyone else from the area near the prison thought about holing up there? It would seem like a good idea to me in that situation.

We'll be seeing more of the area around the prison later on in the series. All will be explained.

5) Is anyone with the proper medical know how and equipment even out there trying to find an answer to the zombie problem, cures, vaccines and the like? Boy, after all Hershel's been through, finding out it WAS a good idea to keep them zombies would break him, if he hasn't broken already...

There may be someone out there... but who knows if we'll ever see them.

6) If I was safely holed up in a prison or someplace during a zombie menace, and one of my friends/family members got killed and came back, I'd lock them down somewhere so I could see how long it took them to

decompose.

I figure it would help to know that, as by the time they decompose more than likely all the previous zombies would be gone, too. That, and I must admit I'd feel a sense of satisfaction at the ability to occasionally point and laugh at a few of my friends if they did something stupid and got themselves zombified. This doesn't seem to have crossed any of the characters' minds, though.

I think you are a heartless bastard.

7) Now I'll suggest a few things to all the readers who helped me find cool stuff. I highly recommend that everyone who reads this buys HBO's *Carnivale* Season 1 on dvd, and records all of the 2nd season episodes that are still On-Demand. Maybe if HBO gets even more money, there will be a TWD series on HBO one day. Also, pick up DC's *Blood of the Demon*. It's written by Will Pfeifer, from my home town. I think he even used to play live-action Vampire the Masquerade in the same group I did.

I've met Will, he's a good guy. I only watched one episode of *Carnivale* and it wasn't bad but I just never sought it out. I find that if you watch two episodes of an HBO show you're hooked for life... and there's only so many hours in the day.

Okay, thanks for listening! I'm very happy to hear that you already have plans for issue 25. That means I'll still get to read at least 8 more issues, hopefully plenty more! Can't wait to see Morgan and Duane again, and the aliens in #75 (okay, I do hope the alien thing is a joke, and no something you're serious about but making seem like a joke so as to throw us off when it actually happens).

Man, I've got plans for this book well past 50. As long as numbers hold this book will be around for a good long time. And yeah... the alien thing is a complete joke.

When the zombies arise, here's to the comic geeks taking over the world!
(chug, slam)
Dan Haskell
Rockford, IL

P.S. Obviously you've seen Yatta. Any idea what the hell G-R-double E-N-L is? GREENL?

It's PEOPLE! PEEEEOPLE!!!!

Dear, Mr. Kirkman

Before get into this, know that I love your comic. It is in contest for my favorite comic I've ever read. I met you at the Seattle Comic-Con a month or two ago. I was the dude in the Phantasm shirt, you might remember me, might not. Here we go.

I don't remember what I had for dinner last night. There's only room for comics up in this head of mine.

A few people in internet land have said that this book has racist-undertones. Saying that you are using it as a metaphor for people not listening to holocaust deniers. It has also been said that this book is very popular in white power circles. I googled the hell out of the last one, and can't find any evidence on it mind you.

Yeah, look... there's no racist-undertones in this book. The coolest guy in the book is black... or Asian depending on who you ask. It's women I hate. (That's a joke...damn it.)

I'm going to play devil's advocate for a second here. Issue 13's cover is perfect. You get to see Rick, the hero, blue eyes, blonde hair. (Rick has brown hair) A man trying to protect "his way of living", no matter what number of inhuman beings he has to exterminate. The zombies, a possible metaphor for how the Nazis viewed the Jews? Inhuman, greed/driven for a single goal, no respect for life, etc. The Nazis let themselves believe that the Jews, were in fact subhuman thus treating them like monsters. Some might say that that's what TWD is all about. (and they would be crazy.) Showing, and saying that it is ok to exterminate an entire race, as long as they are not human to you. Rumors saying that Tony Moore left the book because of this. (Are you kidding? Tony is the most racist cat I know. He's racilicious!) Racial views have not always been left out in the zombie culture obviously. Bela Lugosi, in *White Zombie*, using black Haitian zombies in his plantation. For instance, in the first

issue, you introduced the black father, Morgan, and black son. They have a bad car, live in a bad neighborhood. Of course Rick lets them stay, but it seems they are only welcome in the white neighborhood as long as they improve it for its owners and don't entertain any thoughts of settling there permanently. (This is insane) Stereotypes are fun too. The only two people of color in the prison, murderer, and crack head. (It was a prison for Christ's sake. Would you rather they were in for rape and poor dancing? The white guy was a serial killer!) Oh, and yah they're involved sexually. (See, that's not a stereotype! Right?) Tyreese was a tough football player. (should it have been hockey?)

I find myself not on board with some of these observations, as there are facts to point out their flaws. (I wish you had mentioned these facts. Send another letter.) To me, the villains are not only the zombies, but often ourselves. I personally view this book as survival story, with some undertone of good social commentary. If anything else just see it as one dude who is writing a good zombie story, one for the ages in fact. BUT, I just wanted to bring it to your attention and see if any of it holds weight with you? So Mr. Kirkman...do you put nationalistic, or racist undertones into this fine comic?

No. Not even close. Jesus.

PS...Posters are a must. Colored patches with TWD logo (if you don't I will screen print em first!).

I'll look into it. If there is to be TWD merchandise... you'll hear it here first.

Back to the race thing for a minute... Tyreese was a used car salesman after a short football career. Morgan lived in a bad neighborhood... but hey I lived in a bad neighborhood at the time... and I'm white. The thing is, anyone could read anything into the context of this book if they tried hard enough. It just doesn't make it so.

Dear Robert and Charlie

I'm quite sure most readers will focus on the emotional fireworks in this the latest issue of *The Walking Dead*. BUT what impresses me the most, is the shrewd fashion in which you set up future storylines. Since Rick's group prison stay started, more and more "Roamers" have trickled their way to the prison's gates. Just now our survivors have discovered the fruits of their neglect. Of course they have had more immediate concerns. You add that to Dexter's statement about the hidden stash of weaponry and its obvious that the gates will give and that WAR is coming.

Rick's new unwritten law is kind of obvious in these savage new times. But I wonder what it'll do to little Carl's head. Dexter's evaluation of the group's sanity is not too far from the truth. Living between doom and gloom is sure to traumatize anyone.

Now that everyone has mentioned each and every zombie flick ever, it's up to me to invite a little controversy by bringing up a short film that had some of the most terrifying dead walkers ever. Even if at the end they turned out to be only dancing ghouls. Yes, I'm talking about that alleged child molester's video Thriller. You may or may not like Michael Jackson's music. But John Landis, director of *American Werewolf in London* did a great job and Rick Baker's make up was wonderful and ghastly.

I haven't seen that video in forever... I'll have to look that up.

Love Charlie's work. Page 2 panel 1 had a great but quiet emotional intensity. Once again keep Adlard chained to his drawing table and the regular title in b&w, but I'm rooting for a TWD annual in full color featuring Tony Moore in a one-off return.

As promised I bought the first two *Invincible* trades. I'll read them soon. I have a good feeling I'll like it too. TWD has become my favorite title by far. Still can't believe you are this good at only 26.

Bah, I'm really 47. I mean... do I LOOK 26?

Your loyal reader
Victor Rosario Fermain

What happens when *Invincible* clashes with *The Walking*

Dead? You
will find out soon via snail mail.

Ooh! I can't wait!

Howdy, Mr. Kirkman,

Not being a fan of all things zombies, your comic flew under my radar. After reading great things about you, I gave your superhero comics a try. Not bad, I thought. Still I passed on your 'zombie' book. That is, until an uneventful 'fifth week event' caused me to skip most comics coming out in December.

With a few extra dollars in my pocket, I figured I'd give your zombie book a try. GREAT READING!!! After two TPB's and a handful of issues, you've made me a zombie fan.

Jeff Ghearing

PS: I still think most zombie movies are crap. Prove me wrong!!! Patiently waiting for the Walking Dead movie.

You have obviously not seen the Romero flicks. Welcome aboard, though. It's good to have you.

Dear Robert Kirkman,
I just finished issue #17, and man was it ever intense! This is by far my favorite comic series, and each issue makes me love it even more. What I really love about what you and the art team are doing with The Walking Dead is show how these people are adjusting to this world they are forced to live in. There are no entirely good or bad guys (well, maybe Thomas), just people who are trying the best they can, but will end up making mistakes. You could have easily made Rick a perfect character that

was always solving the group's problems. Instead you are forming a real character who has definitely let his position get to him. I can't wait to see where he is in issue 75 (hopefully equipped with some anti-alien weaponry.) That is of course assuming that he lives that long..

Charlie Adlard,
You definitely knew what you were doing this issue. Rick's attack was awesome, you really made me feel his rage. That two-page spread was just too sweet as well.

Cliff Rathburn,
Mighty fine work on the grey tones again. I particularly loved how you "colored" that last page.

Tony Moore,
This may just be my new favorite Walking Dead cover, simply brilliant. I hope you can stay on as cover artist for the long haul.

Keep up the great work,
Isaac Milton

Thanks for the kind words all around.

Just read Issue 17. Have to say making posters is a fantastic idea. I'd buy one as long as it wasn't extremely gaudy which seems unlikely with The Walking Dead but I'll throw it out there as a caveat anyway. I'm trying to think of other merch I'd like to see... only two things I can think of would be either a sticker or static cling of some kind (Which would work in your benefit when everyone driving behind me on saw "The Walking Dead" looking back at them) or some kind of patch or something because it seems to be all the rage to pin and sew patches to book bags now a days. (Unless your school doesn't allow you to use knapsacks anymore, which is becoming more the case these days than it ought to be.)

Y'know... I think I may just look into that.

I actually picked up Sea of Red the same week Issue 17 and I read it before I read The Walking Dead (I subscribe to the save the best for last theory... and at the time Sea of Red was an unknown so I read it first.) so imagine my surprise when you mentioned it and how good it was in the letter hacks. I picked it up solely based on the artwork and how unusual it is. I mean as good as Jim Lee and the Kubert brothers are when every book looks exactly the fucking same I'll give anything or anyone with the balls to try something different a chance. The "gimmick" of a sort of red tinted sepia tone look aside, it turned out to be one hell of a book. I must see where this tale of vampire pirates will take me.

See, guys... I only recommend the best. Sea of Red is a great book... and if you like that... check out Strange Girl, coming in June.

I'm going to have to disagree with you on Runaways Vol. 2 being the perfect jump on point. When it came out I talked to my comic book guy and told him my reservations about

jumping onto any book midway through and he assured me "Buy this book. If you don't like it I'll buy it back." which gave me that warm and fuzzy feeling. I told myself "If someone loves a book that much it has got to be at least half way decent." and I trusted this guy because after all he was doing the same with the TPB of The Walking Dead the second they hit shelves. So I read Runaways #1 vol 2 and I thought it was crap. I was totally going to take him up on his offer, but for the \$3 it's not worth it to ask him to buy it back even if I did feel vile for having read it. But after a week or so some voice in the back of my head said to give it another chance, so I found and read Runaways vol1 and thought it was the shit. I still think vol2 issue 1 is weak though. Especially when you compare it to any issue of vol 1. (though in reality Vol 1 did amp it up each and ever issue, so if issue 1 is the worst he has to offer we are goin to be in for a nice ride.)

Ah, you came around in the end. Runaways is great. I stand by my recommendation of volume 2 though. I love my BKV.

My favorite of the Vaughan books (Y the Last Man, Runaways, Ex Machina) is definitely Ex Machina. Something about the way he manages to weave the

political debate in a "super hero" book is remarkable. His

debates always seem to logically thought out you have to wonder if Vaughan isn't a god damn Vulcan because I can't help but think if he were an actual politician the world would be a much better place. Plus even if Ex Machina begins to suck a big one nothing, absolutely nothing will compare to the way I felt when I got turned that page and saw the last page of issue #1. I got teary eyed and no comic book has ever done that... ever. (Sorry dude zombies freak me out good and plenty but they don't make me teary eyed... paranoid sure, but never teary eyed.)

Ex Machina is a damn fine book.

And now on a completely unrelated topic, I find I'm most productive when I have certain key pieces of music playing so I'm wondering, do you listen to music when you write? If you do, do you have any particular favorites? I being a music director at my college's radio station I'm always trying to find out what people's music taste is so I can recommend other good music to them they might like, because in a way that is sort of my job.

I do listen to music while I write but it becomes background noise after a while. I listen to all kinds of music but my favorites right now would be Nick Cave, Neil Young, David Bowie... stuff like that.

-Jesse Mrozowski

I've never read Battle Pope, never been able to find it anywhere for sale, but does it feel a little odd now with the pope having just died?

Hey, I didn't kill the guy. June 2005 is the fifth anniversary of Battle Pope so that release has been planned for a while. June also marks my fifth year in the industry.

HOLY SPIT!!!!

The Walking Dead is NOT about zombies! Sure, sure it took me 17 issues to catch on but I am on board now! Funny I could have sworn that this book was about zombies... I had been wondering how you would extend the life of the comic past twenty or so issues, especially given the rate of death of the living characters, and the fact that living gets attacked by un-dead - repercussions ensue - can only be done in a limited number of ways.... But the zombies are only a secondary horde of characters... The really story is how a small group of the living will re-establish 'civil' society! FOR THE LOVE OF TOAST THAT IS BRILLIANT!

Needless to say I LOVE the book... and I now view your possibilities as limitless! What will the RULES be? How do you re-establish social norms in a society now crowded with the walking dead? Can the group avoid the same mistakes that lead the pre-zombie world astray? [These are rhetorical by the way]

Hell Kirkman, I liked the book before, I am completely hooked now! Good show!

I cannot end the letter without a tip of the hat to the art team... from the pure rage of Tony's cover to the intensity of Charlie and Cliff's interior. I simply cannot remember the last time human emotion was rendered with such passion. In a word thank you to the whole team!

[p.s. this is my first letter to a comic and some such nonsense if that aids my chances in being printed]

Dearest Mr. "YOU KILL YOU DIE",

Other than that, I'm lovin' it (to quote the worst ad campaign ever). One more method of feeding my zombie desires. I hope the series keeps up for quite a while. Though I believe your idea of zombie ***** has been taken already, by that new movie "Undead." Better luck next time.

- Andy "You kill, you die" H.

Yo Hacks.

Everyone has been asking me about my opinion on "The Walking Dead" published from Image. Since Arrow produced one of comicdoms first on going zombie-Romero-esque style comics on the market back in 1986.

I had read a few of the later titles that appeared like "Zombie World", "Night of the Living Dead: London", and later editions of "Dead World" published by Caliber Comics. While all of these were interesting, none of them compelled me to want to grab the next issue to see what happens.

I had tried twice to relaunch my own version of a zombie holocaust comic called "The Dead", both times the books had great reviews, however both suffered the loss of thier artists within three issues. Not being able to find the right replacements with a style geared towards the genre, caused the cancellation both times with numbers climbing. Frustrating to no end...sigh...

Anyway, people I knew kept asking, "so whadda ya think of the new Walking Dead comic?" So I decided it go out and give it a try. Anyone who knows me, knows I'm a huge zombie fan and has seen about every film made from "The Invisible Invaders" (cool & underrated), all the Dead and Living Dead films even the Italian flicks, seen 'em all.

So it was off to the local comic shop. Ebay proved the early editions were both hard to get and expensive. My local shop owner was out of the first trade, but I picked up the second one and all the remaining issues.

Well, I've just finished everything up to issue 16 and here's my thoughts. This is one of the best books on the market today. I can see what the strong appeal is.

First I'll tackle the art of the series: Both Tony Moore and current artist Charlie Adlard are good, not jaw dropping great, but they are suitable for the book. Sometimes the characters seemed a little stiff (okay for zombies, I suppose...lol). Often backgrounds were left lacking a little. The use of grey tones was nice as was the use of shadow and lighting. I'd read about the penciling change and I feel it was a real mark of change. Once after the first 10 pages about readers, compare the pros and cons of each did really noticed. I hope that's a good thing. Overall my grade on the art is a C+ or B-.

Now for the writing/plot : Not much to complain about here. The characters have depth and are well rounded and motivated. Many soap opera methods of pacing are used though out the book making it a quick and interesting read. Believe me keeping a band together, feeling safe and goal focused is a real challenge in this type of book. And Kirkman hits his mark. If I could lodge a complaint, it's just not enough gore and zombie action. We all love our characters but we love our blood and guts too. My overall grade here is a B+ or A-

This is a good comic! Glad I bought it, one of the best on the market today, and I'll be buying issue 17. Also big bonuses for an awesome letters page, and for keeping a fairly regular schedule.

While there will always be comparisons in comics, I'm glad people enjoyed our "Dead World" series and hope the new one lives up to expectations. Meanwhile,

forward to publishing a new "The Dead" series near the end of the year. I can only hope my book will be greeted with as much anticipation.

Keep up the good work.
Ralph Griffith

Thanks for all the kind words and critiques, Ralph. I'll be sure to check out "The Dead" when it comes out. Please write back and let us all know when you've got a firm date set.

Okay, boys... that's it for the letters column this month. I hope you enjoyed it. I'll see you all back here next month, right? RIGHT?

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
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OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Thanks go out to all you deads and deadettes for picking up our twentieth issue! The big two oh! Ah, twenty, too young to be in love... too old not to be. It's good to officially make it into the big numbers on this book. Hope you people are enjoying the story so far, it shows no signs of ending just yet.

Our first order of business is to welcome aboard a new member to our creative team. As of this issue, Rus Wootton has come on board as our new letterer! That's right, kids, I'll no longer be personally throwing the word balloons on the page and pointing the tails at the person who's talking... that'll be all up to Rus. He's been lettering invincible for about TEN issues now, so no worries, we're in good hands. I mean it when I say that aside from Chris Eliopoulos and John Workman, Rus is the ONLY guy I'd trust to letter the book. He's a real pro so I hope you'll all give him a warm welcome.

And now for something completely different.

Last issue in a preposterous etter that implied that this book has racist undertones I jokingly said that Tony Moore is a racist. Some would argue that racism is not a joking matter and some would be correct. I was totally in the wrong and I accept full responsibility. So please, stop breaking Tony's windows, Tony Moore is NOT racist. He is however, "racilicious" as I mentioned last issue, but I did some research and as it turns out... that just means he can run really fast

My bad.

In other news, I don't know how many of you out there also read my superhero comic, INVINCIBLE but I just approved the printing proofs for the Invincible, Ultimate Collection hardcover. So that should be in stores NOW at the same time as this issue. It's a big, thick, book... full of all kinds of goodies, on top of issues 1-13. So it's the PERFECT starting point for anyone who may be interested in how I write things that don't include zombies. Also, it's a steal at \$34.95 and it makes an EXCELLENT gift. So pick it up. If for nothing else, pick it up for the introduction by Brian Michael Bendis.

Speaking of Brian, he had a little fun with me in the letters column of POWERS #11 by printing my phone number. Now, I've gotten a little TOO MANY phone calls from people and it's getting pretty old... so I figure I've got to do SOMETHING to retaliate... so I think I'll print a nice, OLD, photo of Brian from back when we both lived in Cleveland and he used to baby-sit me. Those were the days. I win.



Now, it's an old photo and I had to have my mom scan it (which was a task in and of itself) so it may not print well... but I stl.

wanted to share.

So, uh... letters... you want some? Here you go!

Dear Bobby Kirkman

I took the advice you gave me in the reply to my last letter to heart. "Get a life!" so simple and yet so profound. It moved me to spend the last month in quiet meditation and here is the insight I gained. If I were destined to get a life it probably would have happened before I became a 35-year-old married man with a basement full of long boxes. So it's back to writing letters to comic books for me. Lets face it like any comic fan I sport a semi every time I see a letter in print.

A "semi" man... you've got problems. Did I REALLY tell you to get a life? That's harsh. Sorry.

I have to admit I've been a little impatient to see the characters of Walking Dead start to build something of a society but I've decided I'm expecting too much too soon. Rick and the others are still dealing with a lot of emotional shit and coming to the prison only made things worse. While they were driving around in the RV just trying to keep from starving they had to keep things bottled up but now that they've found relative safety inside a prison with a serial killer and one pissed off shotgun wielding inmate those emotions will have to surface and be dealt with before they can seriously think about rebuilding their lives.

In this issue they did take a very big step towards societal building, their first execution. Ok they kind of fucked it up and they weren't able to kill Thomas the way they wanted to (have these people ever heard of posting a guard?). But they did come to a consensus that capital punishment was necessary and that Thomas met the conditions for such punishment.

Rick has two main challenges if he's ever going to move the group from day to day survival to building some sort of stable community.

1) He's got to stop the living from killing the living. This may mean sharing power with the inmates, especially now that they're armed.

2) He needs to get his group to believe once again that they will survive.

The belief that one might live in the world of the dead is fast becoming the minority opinion.

I'm going to go and read Walking Dead again. Maybe I'll even pull my trades out and read the series from the start again. Keep up the good work Kirkman and fuck you for killing those little girls.

Ken Lindgren

The little girls weren't real. So no worries there, thankfully.

Mr. Kirkman

Wow...been reading comics since 1990 (Jesus, has it been 15 years already?) and yours is one of the most entertaining. It's not often you find good storylines and interesting characters; and while I love George Romero's work to death, your book beats the unliving crap out of "Toe Tags." Anyways...I just have a quick question or two, if you wouldn't mind answering them

1. Where the hell is the military? Being in the service myself, I admit to being a little one sided...but they couldn't all have been wiped out. Even if you did put all armed personnel in the city to protect the civilians, you'd still need military bases to provide logistical support (helicopters, air crews, munitions dumps, communication posts, etc.) During a national emergency like 9/11,

military bases close their gates and have security levels that'd make Colonel Klink sit down and cry. I find it difficult to believe

over run...many bases have heavy brick gates or fences, much like your prison...it wouldn't be difficult at all to hold out.

We just haven't gotten to that yet. Sit tight.

2. A previous letter writer mentioned rigor mortis. Unless I'm mistaken, rigor mortis wears away after a day or two as the body decays, which brings me to my last question-

Hey, check that out... a good explanation.

3. Are the bodies decaying at a normal rate? I wouldn't think so, but I do wonder if you have some kind of formula as to how long it takes. If I recall, Dr. Logan in Day of the Dead mentioned something about the decay process taking nearly twelve years before a zombie would become immobile... but I doubt you're using Romero as scripture.

Looking forward to some more great reading

C.S. Muncy

The bodies are NOT decaying at a normal rate. They are decaying but it varies so much from zombie to zombie depending on climate, activity and so on... there's no way to peg down an actual time line. Also, our characters are worried about more important things at the moment.

Rick has to die. There I said it. He seems to cause more trouble than he's worth, especially in issue 17 when he says.

"Listen to me, I'm a cop-I've been trained to make decisions like this. I'm the only one here in a position of authority... That's what you all look up to me for... I'm in charge"

He deserves to die for making such an egotistical statement. The person who says they should be the leader is the one person who should NOT be the leader. Be wary of those who desire power. Like didn't we learn anything from Plato's Republic about what makes a good leader? I guess not.

KILL RICK

Best wishes (on killing off rick)

Wes Monillas

I'll get right on that.

Dear TWD,

Two letters printed! I am officially the envy of my L.C.R. (Local Comic Retailer). I shop at Comic Cave here in Columbus and it was Mike that got me started on your book. Most of the employees there seem to be big fans. I've been reading since #3. I collect both the monthlies and the TPBs.

Unfortunately I got #18 before #17. I know shipping can be a problem in the industry (I've given up on Ultimates), but I'm patient enough if the work is worth it. In your case it is. I knew Andrea wouldn't get killed (her and Dale just seem like they've got some major part to play in the road) so I wasn't surprised. However, I like that Andrew and Dexter got out and got guns, great cliffhanger (though with the cover of #19 I'm sure the new visitor will force a temporary truce of some sort). Each of the characters, Glen and Maggie, Herschel, Tyreese and Carol, etc. seem to be coming into their own. I can fully understand how the characters have started to determine how their story is being told. So far Lori is my favorite because, as crazy as it seems, she makes the most sense. I think the longer they're at the prison the more we're going to get to know these people and the better. Keep up the good work.

As for the art, Cliff Rathburn is making a strong argument for the unsung heroes of comics. Normally all the praise goes to the writer and penciler and maybe some leftovers to the inkers. Let's hear it for the gray tones (and I remembered his name this time).

For the record I was also one of those people that first thought Tony couldn't be replaced (I'm very grateful for his covers, #9 is the best to date, but #19 looks pretty darn cool too), but Charlie is a much better storyteller in my opinion. One of the other letter writers mentioned how Charlie gets the characters across through their eyes (one of the reasons Lori is a favorite of mine) and their expressions. I think Charlie is becoming well known for his subtle, and yet powerful storytelling. Like the zombies, it creeps up on you.

On to standard numbered questions (and you can answer in letter ala Bendis without apology).

1- What type of society do you see this little group developing? Earliest settlers tried a communal approach, but found that the work/reward (as is the biggest problem with Communism) was dispersed unevenly. Rick is the clear leader (tribe patriarch) but soon he'll have to realize that he could be killed anytime and where would that leave Carl and Lori. Just a down-the-road type question.

You'll have to wait and see.

2-It seems Patricia is the resident "free-spirit" (setting Thomas free only to be attacked). We've also seen Herschel go from "caring for the undead" to slapping around his son for being "disrespectful". Will this become the foundation for "alliances" (ala Survivor), liberal and conservatives?

Would you really want me to give stuff like this away in a letters column?

3- Land of the Dead seems to be pushed up to mid July release. How many times do you think you'll see it in theater?

That all depends on how much I like it the first time.

4 - We'll see the remnants of government by issue #50? (attempt to

you down)

Probably NOT.

Keep up the great writing (or simply let the characters tell their tale and get the \$\$\$& out of the way) and I'll keep up the reading.

Sincerely,

Merl Key

I'll do what I can. Thanks for writing Merl

Dear Kirkman,

Well, it does seem that 18 got away from you. I know some have complained, but I like that the covers don't tend to truthfully represent the story inside. It makes the twists even more exciting. It's like Moore shows us what we expect to see (since he probably expects it at the time he draws them - before you loose control of the characters). So here goes:

1. So we're what, six to seven months after the whole zombie plague began? Are you very concerned with decomposition rates, or are you writing that off like rigormortis and other stuff that confuses things. Adlard's zombies are gettin pretty rotten.

I'm not concerned with it. There's always new zombies out there being made.

2. Are the zombies...getting smarter?

NO

3. In issue 75, can we see the mirror universe where zombies are nice to people and have little Fu Manchus?

Maybe after the aliens come.

4. Tyreese got bit, didn't he?

Hen.

5. Could you give us a movie casting call for The Walking Dead movie? Who would Simon Pegg play?

Simon would be great for Hershel if he were a bit older. He doesn't LOOK the part but he certainly acts well enough to play Rick. Hell, if I had my say I'd let Simon pick.

6. For Adlard (if available) - What kind of research do you do when drawing wounds and zombies? Do we really want to know?

Well, Charlie is somewhere in England sleeping right now, and this letters column is due to Image soon... so... I'll answer. Adlard has more than enough dead bodies around his house to use for reference. Just ask his neighbors... if you can find them. (I wonder if I'll be apologizing for THIS next issue).

Hey, Undead and Land of the Dead come out soon. I believe Tobe Hooper is working on a zombie movie too. If Inevitable works out, maybe there will be a Walking Dead movie... One can dream.

Chris Pitts

We shall see. Hollywood is a fickle bird. Nobody can predict what may be just over the horizon

Dear Mr. K rkman

Zombies rock. There's no way around it and for some inexplicable reason I'll always be drawn to the Z Word. People automatically think it's the gore". My response is a recorded one: "Zombies are a classic narrative device". They can be incredibly distant adversaries. They can also be the people closest to you. What better image is there than a husband impaling his fresh y dead wife with a machete? You've got drama and horror in the same package. The 'Walking Dead' uses all of that and then some. It's got characters you can care about. It's got the violence that works with the plot. It even has "gasp" suspense. Thanks to your teams work, when people scoff at my Japanese DVD of "Zulu Cannibal Flesh Eaters PART XII" I'll be able to whip out the newest issue of "The Walking Dead". It's solid proof that zombie stories aren't restricted to hilarious disembowelments.

Sometimes you can actual y care.

1. Do you ever feel pressured to put zombie action in an individual issue?

Obviously not. The zombie stuff happens when it needs to happen. It will come in waves. As the book goes on there will be large chunks of issues with consecutive zombie action... followed by large runs with NO zombies. I'll be changing things up as time goes on.

2. Will the zombies be getting smarter?

NO.

3. What do you consider to be the funniest kill in the history of zomb.edom?

FUNNIEST? Something from Peter Jackson's DEAD ALIVE for sure. The priest getting impaled maybe...

I'd like to sign off by saying that the "Walking Dead" brought me and my brother together. We're such cheapskates that we take turns buying the single issues. Just for the letters page. The decision of who gets to keep the complete set hasn't come up yet, but just like Rick said "We'll burn that bridge when we come to it." It'll probably involve an axe, give

and
a bindfo.d.

Sincerely (At two in the morning),
Justin Decloux

Here's hoping you survive the fight with your brother. Thanks for reading.

Mr. Kirkman,
I've never written in to a comic book letter column before (yeah, I know I'm the millionth one to say that). Up until wandering into a great comic shop on a whim about two months ago, I hadn't been in one in nearly a decade. It's been great getting back into reading comics, and Walking Dead is certainly one of the best, and my persona favorite right now. I bought both trades and then all the individual books up to present. The storytelling and dialogue is incredible. I can't wait to get my hands on the four invincible trades to get more of it.

All of this is why I was so disappointed when I finished issue 18 of The Walking Dead, the first issue I had to wait a month for. Thomas's death felt like a cop-out. You did a great job of creating an intriguing premise and raising a great question: how would this makeshift society deal with justice? I couldn't wait to find out what effect an execution would have on the individuals and the dynamics of the group (especially between Rick and Lori). And then you had to have Thomas shot in an act of defense, instead of dealing with the situation of an execution and its ramifications. After demonstrating such great skill in handling other unique situations (the barn is one great example), I was really disappointed.

Hey, you win some... you lose some.

I guess the fact that this event bothered me so much is the exception that proves the rule (the rule that The Walking Dead is the best comic being published right now). Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Schuyler Schuster

Yeah, that's it. Good point.

Crew,

After 18 issues, I've finally decided to write. (And yes, I've written to comics before). First, a superb job and yes, the b/w does heighten the comic, but the emotion in the comic. Now to part you've heard, but not like this: 28 Days Later and The Day of the Triffids are both excellent films (and Triffids is a great book, if you read it, avoid the lame sequel - Night of the Triffids). So WD parallels the opening of these films? So what? Doesn't let it bother you. Day of the Triffids isn't a zombie film. It's about (book here) mobile, carnivorous plants that run amok on earth after a meteor shower (or unknown space weapon - Wyndham was a bit paranoid) blinds like 90 percent of earth's populace. The hero isn't in a coma, he's been blinded by an attack at a Triffid farm (they are big business). As for 28 Days Later, which I loved, it isn't a real zombie film. The people in it aren't dead, they're enraged to the point of being unable to do anything but kill. (They lifted this for the remake of Dawn of the Dead. I don't go for fast zombies myself). OK, now that that's settled, don't let it bother you, OK?

So what do I like about WD? The atmosphere. The unpredictability of the sequences, not knowing whose going to die next. You've kept it from being another zombie comic (Deadworld which sucked and Toe Tags which totally sucked, as well as NOTL: Barbara's Zombie Chronicles which may have sucked the most of all fell into this), and kept humanity in it. It's not enough to be a Vertigo title, and one of my favorite monthly issues. The only thing I didn't like is the Zombies eating animals. If they are going to do this, with their numbers, humanity is simply doomed, since they'll eat anything that comes across their path. I wouldn't visit this again. Explain it away that Rick's smell was on the horse and drop that idea.

I gotta say... we've been eating animals for as long as we've been around and it hasn't thinned the herd too terribly much. I doubt zombies are actively seeking out and eating animals like we were.

Some things I'm wondering are:

1 - Have any of the government survived? (I kind of didn't buy that zombies could take down an M1 tank by the way)

What is it with these questions this month--has it always been like this?

2 - How about survivalists hostile to the government even before the zombies?

All things come to those who wait

3 - This going to be another freaking "It happened because it happened" or will we get a reason here?

A reason for what? The zombie invasion? If that's what you mean... probably not.

4 - Please kill Lori off. She's a pain in the ass, and has been since her introduction. There is no place in the WD world for civilized ways.

Hasn't she seen this yet? Oh, and kill off Otis ex-girl friend as well. Please do it extremely graphically since she's another pain in the ass. Herschel could get whacked too

You should seek therapy. Really--you're way too into death. These poor characters have done very little to deserve so much hate

Well, I'm looking forward to issue 19, and I'm glad sales are good. Keep up the good work and don't be afraid to be a little more like a Zombie Survival Guide, everything in it is from movies you've seen already

By the way: two best zombie movies ever: Dawn of the Dead (original) and Shaun of the Dead.

Worst - Anything from Italy.

Rob Morganbesser

Staten Island, NY

WH-AT? Lucio Fulci's "Zombie" or "Zombi 2" or "Zombie Flesh Eaters" (it's all the same movie!) is really awesome. A zombie--FIGHTS A FRIGGIN' SHARK in it. It's really cool.

Hi

I can't take it anymore!!! My local (2 hours drive one way) comic shop missed putting issue 13 aside for me, and they are out. So now I have issue 14,15,16 but I don't want to read them before I have gotten issue 13. But I don't think I can wait anymore, I will read them tonight. I must congratulate you and the crew for making a comic for which I am addicted to. Just keep 'em coming, and I will buy 'em.

From a walkin' live one in Norway
Cheers,
Ole

We i, I don't think khepri.com is doing international orders yet, but you could always try ebay.com or milehighcomics.com for any back issues you've missed. Happy hunting!

Kirkman!

I hope you're happy that I've become unhealthily addicted to all the comics you churn out every month! 'Cause my wallet certainly ain't!

As for Walking Dead #18... GREAT. As I was reading it, it finally dawned on me, the cast are starting to go insane! The pressure of surrounded by zombies, rotting corpses, friends deaths and hiding out in a prison has started to become too much!

The level-headed Rick you introduced to us has gone! Great stuff

Kirkman!

Also the who's who list was greatly appreciated, since there's such a large ensemble of characters that when a name is mentioned I can't a ways remember straight away. Keep it up!

Ivan

P.S. how about a special elsewhere one shot where the cast of Walking Dead is on the brink of madness, and Mark from Invincible swoops down to save their ass, only to be gunned down by Battle Pope who is on a suicide mission, who has secretly been sent by Marvel Comics because they can see you spearheading Image comics as a danger to them and they are trying to secure you for a full-time contract and make you their slave?... let me know your thoughts.

That probably wouldn't be a very good book.

Kirkman and Co.:

I have been loving this ride that you all having been putting us on. I just got done reading #16 (I know it is later than hell to just be read this issue, but I order my comics over the Internet, and then read them in order of least anticipation to most anticipation: you know delay the satisfaction as long as possible bleh!)

Anyway, after finally making it through ALL those letter pages. . (Goddamn man, who d'you think you are, BENDIS!?) I finally decided to break down and write you and let you know what a great job you have been doing. I love this book! I have been a fan of yours and Tony's since Battle Pope #1 (BTW, Congrats on getting those in color, I'm looking forward to seeing it, although Tony's style works really well in B & W) and you guys never disappoint. Charlie has been doing great since Tony left, but I still get to see Tony's work first thing I took the hint about sharing the love around, and a huge thumbs up to Cliff, those Gray Tones are great and just the right edge to the panels. That letterer you got could use some practice.) I have never been a huge fan of horror books, I can read them and enjoy them, but usually don't buy them. I jumped on this because of you and Tony to give it a try, and you have gotten me hooked!

I really like the idea with the jail, although it was kind of a letdown seeing the accountant doing all the killing. I kinda figured that was what was going to happen, everyone thinks accountants are only white-collar criminals...BUT it being tax season and all, I guess you just couldn't let it get by. Being an accountant myself, I know I definitely felt like cutting off a few heads by the end of tax season.

Keep up the great work!
Patrick Geer

It's always good to hear from peop-e who found this book because of the work Tony Moore and I did on Battle Pope. You guys are the best. Where were the REST of you five years ago?!

Kirkman,

I just read issues 17 and 18, and 17 is one I've been waiting for. I loved seeing Rick finally snap. We've been building to this moment since the first issue, and it's definitely a turning point for the series. You said when you started this series that the Rick at the end would be nothing like the Rick in the first issue, and I think we're already at that point

It just gets worse from here.

I do have to say I was a bit disappointed with the way things turned out for Thomas in issue 18. You had a guy hanging on the cover, then totally switch it up. I guess that's what you were talking about when you said the story wrote itself. Having him shot to death and thrown to the zombies just seemed too easy for him. He killed two little girls! He deserved to suffer much longer! I'm also very interested to know what development you had planned but decided to put off. I'm assuming you still plan to use it later, but when you do, can you let us know what the original plan was for this issue?

still do it... I'll make sure to let you guys know.

I do really enjoy how Rick's taking charge now. He's been the leader all along, but now he's being faced with some very difficult decisions where he can't necessarily make everyone happy. How the others react to his control (especially Lori) will be very interesting. We're also really beginning to see the tension between Rick and Lori build up. Now, I'm really looking forward to that coming to a head.

I'm keeping it short this time... You're whole team is doing a great job, which gives me very little to complain about in my letters. Keep it up!

Jim Amato

Good to hear from you, Jim.

Dude,

Just wanted to let you know this comic is still the nuts. ("The Nuts?") Definitely my most anticipated monthly. Issue 18 ruled. I am glad that Thomas didn't get hung and that Maggie shot him. One thing about seeing next month's cover is it gives you a little hint of what's com'g. So, I take it you originally planned to hang him, but changed it at the last minute? Whatever, it was a nice touch

If a good idea comes to me, and it doesn't match the cover... I'm not going to be bound to what's on the cover. I'd much prefer to do the better story. All the covers are designed to mislead you anyway so they're ALWAYS at least a little inaccurate.

Great idea adding the who's who at the end. With buying it monthly, it is good to have the reminder. Just one thing though. Under the picture of Lori you said that Rick was unaware of the affair. Yet in a previous issue, after Lori announces to the group she is pregnant, Dale mentions the possibility of Shane and Lori to Rick, and he flips out!! Babbling about only getting laid once since he got back!! So, was that a mistake or what?

He may SUSPECT but he's not SURE it happened. More on this story as it develops -stay tuned.

Keep it up dude. And man, the cliffhanger endings are awesome!

Daniel Aston

Thanks. The cliffhangers are the most fun part for me.

First Thomas kills the girls and then tries to get Andrea as well. Then Rick beats the holy crap out of him. Now that's dark but when we see Andrea's face and Rick's hands up close in #18, you know things are getting darker.

Are we done yet? No way. Glenn and Tyreese are keeping the killer under cruel conditions and then after that nutball Patricia tries to help him escape Maggie unloads her gun into Thomas! WTF?

Dark, dark, dark! I love it! Here I was expecting a hanging too. The story line and cover ended up being a great red herring

But wait, are we done yet? Hell no! Dexter and his bitch boy Andrew have plans of their own. This just keeps getting better and better.

The cover of #19 looks great btw. I dig the way the dead's arms and other jaws are removed for safety.

In #18's Letter Hacks Merl Key asks about Rick fetching Morgan and his boy. I like this idea a lot and hope we see more of them.

Morgan and Duane are still out there... somewhere.

BTW, being a F4 nut I couldn't hold out any longer and picked up foes 1-4. I'm glad I did

Along for the ride and loving it!
Chad Caylor

Thanks for checking out Foes, man. I really appreciate it. I think it's a fun book. I had a blast writing it.

Kirkman

In my recent comic shop visit I picked up a dozen or so comics, Walking Dead being one of them. I usually save the more favorite comics for last, and this comic is definitely one of my favorites. However, this specific reading trip I also picked up Vaughan's UXM #58, and it came next-to-last, right before WD. UXM was a great read this month, and I wasn't sure you could follow it. But you pulled through awesomely, what with the shootin' and the body part eatin' and whatnot in WD #18. Always a trip.

Loving the shit out of everything you're doing; Walking Dead, Invincible, Foes, all that yummy goodness. Got a question though; how 'bout a Sleepwalker appearance in Team-Up? Just to justify the six bucks I spent on Epic Anthology #1 a while back.

Sleepwalker is in Team-Up 9 and 10... how's THAT for service?

Love the etter WD column too, but I'm old school like that. I'm into having a strong comic fan community showing support for the books they love. You, Bendis, and Larsen, the letter columns are as good a read as the stories themselves. I also dig the bio-slash-character-recap pages in the back. There were a couple "oh yeah, I remember him" moments. Whatever happened to that Morgan guy?

-Josh X

Morgan and Duane are still out there... somewhere

Finally, I just want to say thank you Mr. Kirkman for making the best zombie comic book ever. I mean HOLY SHIT it's everything you ever wanted in a zombie comic or movie, suspense, horror, gore, action and characters you love and hate. I first got the comic at #11, yeah I know I jumped in late but I'm going to do everything I can do to get the back issues, but everywhere I go no one seems to have any back ones, just goes to show how HOT these things are. Now on to the comic, I've been reading on how Mr. Adlard is not as good as Mr. Moore but Adlard drawings are incredible and very well detailed and I don't know how you can get any better than that, so people please, LAZ OFF. As for your writing plot notch very impressive, it really gets you into the characters mind and makes us feel how they're feeling, very well done. I have been one of the biggest and I mean BIGGEST zombie fan since I was 7 years old. My favourite zombie movie is Day of the Dead, I probably love it more than you. Hell I love this stuff so much I wish one day the dead would really come back to life. I know that sounds crazy, but here are some questions I hope you have time to answer.

1. What zombie movie do you hate the most? And why? For me it was Return of the Living Dead 3, it was too much of a love story and just a joke.

I can honestly say I've NEVER hated any zombie movie I've ever watched.

2. If you were in a zombie movie what role would you want to play? Survivor. A zombie that gets killed in a gory way. A zombie that eats somebody or someone who gets torn apart by dozens of zombies. Me I would love being torn apart, it would be such a thrill.

Human victim is cool... but I'd love being a zombie too... as long as I didn't have to rub raw animal parts on my face or anything. That's just nasty.

3. Have you heard of the movie risen, it looks and sounds scary as hell and if you haven't go to www.risenmovie.com you won't be disappointed.

I'll have to check that out.

4. Which one do you prefer, Night of the Living Dead original or remake? I like the remake, it's more believable but don't get me wrong the original is a classic.

The original... because it's the original... but the remake is AWESOME. It's a much better remake than the Dawn remake and I LIKE the Dawn remake. I think Tom Savini did a GREAT job on that remake

5. Did you hear that Land Of The Dead has been moved up to June? When or if you see it, will you write down what you thought of the movie?

I can't wait until I get to the letter that says it's been moved up to May. Meh. But yeah--June 28th! I can't wait! I will have seen it by the time this sees print. It's going to be awesome!

I hope nobody has asked you these questions before me, and if they did I'm sorry. (Hey--if they did--I already forgot answering them, so no worries) I hope you print my letter so I can be somewhat part of this walking dead world. So Mr. Kirkman and the whole crew moved keep up the fantastic job. I will always be here and loyal until the end, so signing off (feeling a little hungry)

Adam Carter

Your letter got printed, Adam! Congrats!

One more question! Forgot to ask, and if it's been asked already, I apologize for being a repeated question offender, but are there plans to collect the series in hardback by any chance? Ok that's it.

J. Littleton

Here's a nugget for those of you who read the whole letters column. The Walking Dead will be collected in HARDCOVER in November 2005 in a limited edition hardback that collects issues 1-24 in one HUGE volume. It won't be cheap, though...

Dear Funk Mob,

As I write this missive issue #19 of Walking Dead has just hit the stands. With two years under your belt I'm guessing here, but with the delays between issues it must be more than two years by now since the first issue came out) (we don't hit two years until OCTOBER 2005--there hasn't been THAT many delays.) It is refreshing that each new issue still carries excitement in manners unexpected. When I ordered Walking Dead #1 all those months ago (I own and operate Sidekicks, Inc., a comic shop in Hadley, MA) it was not a series I expected to make it past the fourth issue. That's not a slight, mind you, just an evaluation drawn from years in this business. Walking Dead serves up stories drawn from a genre that has a short track record in the medium--can anyone name a successful long running zombie comic?

Also, it set sail under the Image flag, a company that, to be fair, takes a lot of chances with new titles that do not last pasts four issues.

To be fair--it's ALSO a company that publishes some of the most innovative and entertaining comics on the stands, and MANY more books these days are lasting FAR past issue four. Larsen and Stephenson have really done some good for this company.

With all that weighed against Walking Dead, it managed to exceed my

expectations. I believe it was a confluence of events that brought success to this series. 28 Days Later, let's face it, contributed in an invaluable way by raising the bar on the zombie genre. Without 28 Days Later would the genre have experienced the renaissance we currently enjoy? I think not. Walking Dead, the success of the Resident Evil films, the remake of Dawn of the Dead, they are all products of the excitement that followed in the wake of 28 Days. Walking Dead thrives, however, because of the top-drawer talent that goes into every issue, not because of cinematic trends.

It's rather surprising that I found Walking Dead at all, especially since I'm not a zombie film fan as such, largely because I find gore uninteresting. After seeing the original Dawn of the Dead in 1981 and being rather nauseated by it (a condition no doubt exacerbated by the fully loaded pizza my friends insisted we eat while watching the film) I did not see another zombie film for over a decade. What continued to engage my interest in the genre is the survivalist fantasy. That fantasy element is an integral component of the genre and the best films- Night of the Living Dead, Dawn of the Dead, Return of the Living Dead, Shaun of the Dead- offer that element in equal doses with the gore. While gore is an inescapable element, it is *human* interaction and reaction to the absurd situation of the recently dead returning to feast on the living that carries the central tenet of zombie lore (at least for me): Human ingenuity will drive survival in the face of extinction.

At the Pittsburgh Comic Con in 2002 (the site of what must be an annual Dawn of the Dead cast reunion) while working the Comic Book League Defense Fund booth I saw the first 10 minutes of 28 Days Later- about 100 times over the course of the con. At the weekend the booth across from mine, who specialized in DVDs of films that, shall we say, have not been released yet in an official capacity, showed teasers for all sorts of films. After seeing the opening for 28 Days over and over again I just had to see the rest of the film! Naturally, they sold their last copy before I could make it across the aisle, so I waited several minutes until the film made its way into the local art house cinema.

While 28 Days did not turn me into a complete zombie nut, it did re-ignite and pique my interest in the survivalist element and that led to Walking Dead. I believe the series succeeds, largely, because of the deft job you do straddling the survival fantasy (the last man on Earth idea) and that seems to have an infinite number of permutations, especially in this genre) and the requisite gore. Rick and company continue to grow as characters with each new story arc, which is absolutely necessary for the reader to have a genuine emotional reaction to the characters' losses and triumphs. It's a bit morbid and disturbing, but all the zombie enthusiasts I know share a fascination with surviving in a post zombie holocaust.

Walking Dead provides a monthly (well, almost monthly) (See- there you go again... we're like ONE MONTH (or so) behind schedule... that means we've slipped FOUR WEEKS in almost two years. We're not THAT bad.) installment for that fantasy with all the trimmings. By adhering to a most important idea of the fantasy- slow zombies- despite current popu ar trends- fast zombies we feel hope for Rick's world. The remake of Dawn of the Dead proved entertaining, but the idea of fast zombies leeches off the genre and attracts away the possibility of survival. Slow zombies allow the reader to hope for the future, something beyond the idea that staying alive is as good as it gets... If the trailer for Land of the Dead reveals anything it's that humanity will find a way, even in the face of genocide. You folks don't make it easy for Rick, et al, but their arduous fight for survival leaves the reader with a modicum of hope that they can survive. It also helps that the book remains engaging, full of surprises (especially when other elements are drawn in, like Max Brooks' Zombie Survival Guide, from which the prison arc seems to have originated), (actually, the prison thing was planned from the beginning, well before the first issue came out, and I've yet to read Max's book- I swear) and suspense. Hell, no other comic

on the stands can boost that any character might die in that issue.

This is just a very roundabout way to say good work, fellas, keep it up! If all the zombie films out there were as satisfying as Walking Dead I'd be with them to queue up to see them all. Until that happens, I'll stick with WD. Although, I would prefer to see the book come out on more predictable schedule, perhaps say, every four weeks! If you maintain the level of quality the series has enjoyed I can, however, forgive the occasional tardy issue.

Cheers!
Robert Grover

Seriously, on the schedule thing, I know this book is late but this issue will be in stores in July. A little late yes, but that's 20 issues in 21 months. You're acting like we're Battle Chasers over here! We did lose a few more early weeks between issues 18 and 19 but Charlie's wife was having a BABY and he got a little busy.

Sorry to be so confrontational but the schedule is something I care a great deal about. I'm VERY dedicated to this, and all my other books and it's true that sometimes we'll slip in the schedule a little bit I think that we're better than most in this day and age.

Robert,

There was a time, recently, that I bought nothing but Marvel Comics. If it wasn't Marvel, I didn't buy it.

The Walking Dead has changed all that. This comic is the very essence of awesome in its purest, most natural form. For creating it, I hail to you! HAIL ROBERT KIRKMAN!

That's great- now go out and buy Savage Dragon, Sin City, Hellboy, Noble Causes, Ultra, Ministry of Space, Wanted, The Intimates and the BILLIONS of other books that are just as good as anything Marvel has put out.

Anyway, on to business: If you were actually to put aliens in at around issue 75, or maybe killer robots, or something else like that, I will personally send you \$200 for being the best human ever to live. Anyone who wouldn't send you \$200 is probably a jerk. Buncha jerks.

-Lewis Watts, Zombie lover for life

P.S.-
Seriously \$200

\$200 for something I'm going to do anyway- SOLD! You're not a very bright man Lewis Watts. . and I love you for it!

Mr. Kirkman,

First let me tell you that I have been watching zombie movies since I was 15. I've just finished I had a messed up childhood, and when I came across your book at issue #4 I was excited, I could tell from the cover that this was going to be good. Since then I have been buying your books left and right, the guys at my local comic shop know me when I walk in and they immediately tell me if the new issue is in or not, the funny thing is I never started going to that shop until my friend told me of this comic. I think you got this down just right, the endings to each issue just amazes me so much, my favorite one is when Carl shoots Shane, I could hear that gun shoot and smell the burnt powder of the round. Your plots and writing are great and Adlard and Rathbun are some of the most talented artists I have ever seen.

Also I got a few questions,

1) first off I live in the metroplex in Texas and heard that you guys were in Dallas a while ago and I missed you guys, So I was wondering if you will be coming back to Dallas any time soon? If so when?

At the latest it will be next year when ZEUS COMICS throws CAPE! 2006. Not sure if I'll be there before that. You should have come to CAPE! this year... it was GREAT!

2) Second of all I been having a debate with my friend on what gun Rick is hold on the cover of issue #4 *I personally think it is a H&K USP 9mm* my friend thinks it is not any particular gun.

You're right, it's an H&K USP 9mm... Tony Moore knows his guns... because he, like Charlie Adlard... is a murderer.

3) And third and final, have you ever read this book called "The Complete Survival Guide of Tural Uvedad"? If not you should give it a shot the author writes it like Zombies actually have attacked the world before, and writes it with a serious tone. Well that is all I really looking for the "big surprise" for issue 25.

Sincerely,
Steven Ojeda

You mean the zombie survival guide? Could there REALLY be TWO books out there like that?

Dear Funky Kirkman

First time writing blah blah blah you kick so much yadda yadda yadda amazing book etc etc etc...

That's refreshing

I've been thinking, which is rare, and the topic of my musings is the Walking Dead, or rather it's future. In the issues we're seen so far the heroes have been using up ammunition at a fair old rate and I'm pretty sure that at some point they're going to run out. After all, even with the supplies in the prison, bullets and shells are a finite resource. At some point, not soon, but sometime, the last shell will be thrown and the guys will have nothing to throw at the hoards.

My prediction?

Well, making new shells is out of the question. Firstly they lack materials to manufacture the explosive charge needed for the shells. While you can get chemicals out of nature (cow manure is a good source of sulphur, or so I've been told) recycling spent casings would probably result in inferior bullets and damage to the guns.

So that means bullet less weapons, which means blades and lots of hand-to-hand combat. I'm guessing machete or machete like weapons will be the order of the day (of the Dead), considering a well placed blow can decapitate a zombie with ease. And with a prison library which I'm sure has some books on metalworking in, the guys could probably knock together a forge and produce some serviceable blades. And maybe a few T-spikes for dealing with the zombies pressed against the fence.

If they're feeling really adventurous with their metalworking, maybe a mancatcher or two. Y'know, those metal jaws on sticks which you grab a neck with a force the zombie to the ground for the coup-de-grace. Probably best for dealing with roamers rather than hoards, but it's never a bad thing to be prepared.

That's my theory of the future. This stuff probably won't happen for a couple of years (book time), so I'll just wait until issue sixty something and see if I was right.

Oh yeah, numbered questions? You love numbered questions!

7. What's with you with people and glasses? Everyone in the book who had glasses is now dead! Chris, wore glasses, and turned out to be creepy, and was killed. Rachel, wore glasses, turned out to be a murder victim in training and was killed. Thomas, wore glasses, turned out to be a sex killer, and was killed. Why the glasses hate Kirkman?

That's it. I'm done.

Man, I spend too much time thinking!

David Lewis

You've got me man... I'm a racist glasses hater... the conspiracy is out in the open. My oh my- what am I going to do?

Robert

Well, sorry to say you got another first time letter writer here. Anyway I finally had to speak up about this series. I started picking this series up with issue one, and it's the best damn comic I've read in a long time. Seriously I place this up there with "Preacher" as my all time favorite comic book.

I always read it last when I pick up my stuff (which is actually a compliment since I always save the best one for last) It's a big fan of Romero's work. I think you got it perfect. Except for Thomas being the killer, that was a little predictable. Oh by the way, I never EVER gave a shit about the similarities with 28 days later. It wasn't even really a zombie movie, and I never heard of this role-playing game everybody keeps mentioning. Of course being from a small town in central PA, doesn't help. I totally sympathize with Rick deciding to hang Thomas being the father of three young girls, a nine year old and five year old twins respectfully, I would be tying the knot for him. Being shot was too good for him. Even after the beating! Well, just a few last thoughts for the road. Keep the art black & white. Fast zombies suck ass, and the second aliens start showing up I'll know you've run out of ideas and it's time to find a new favorite book.

Chris Lenkevich

Thanks for the kind words Chris

The Walking Dead, Eh? I Hate This Fucking Book...It Kills Me. How Much Better Can You Make This Series? OK, Before I Get Into Anything Dealing With This Damn Near Perfect Book: I'd Like To Say Thanks For Giving Me Some Printer Ink In The Letter Pages Of Issue #7. First Time I Ever Slide Into The Back Of A Comic And It Was Not Too Shabby To See (Quite Neat, In Fact) Since I Wrote In Then, I've Hit A Little Cash Rut In Life And Had To Cut Out The Majority Of The Titles I Was Picking Up On A Weekly Basis. I Still Make Sure I Have Enough Money In My Pocket Up To 2 Copies Of Each Walking Dead At Least. Just To Give Whatever Support I Possibly Can To This Book. I've Been Snagging Up The Trade Paperbacks As Well To Have Them Available For Friends To Read. People Who Won't Even Pick Up "Comic Books" Are Loving This Material (So, It's Not Just US "Regular Collectors" Digging It) I Personally Have Been Really Enjoying The Way The Story Is Evolving: Not A Single Disappointment Thus Far! I Wrote In Before To Tell Y'all Know What A Great Job You're Doing On This Book, And I Had To Tell You Once Again. I'm Down With The Walking Dead Until You See Fit To Wrap It Up...
Darnck Patrick

It's good to hear that you're out there spreading the word, thanks for the support Derek. I must say though--all those capital letters seem like a lot of work. The effort is not unappreciated, though.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Okay, so unlike the majority of people who read this book and write in to Letter Hacks (and judging by the amount of pages you consistently devote to their musings, that's a LOT of people!), I would not classify myself as a fan of the zombie-genre. Sure, I watched 28 Days Later and Shaun of the Dead was hands down the best film of last year (Hi Simon, if you're reading!), heck I've even had a soft spot for the Thriller video, back when that was the only time Michael Jackson was accused of going jump in the night, but when I read some of the letters sent in by obvious comic-re-obsessed fans, I really do question whether I have a legitimate claim to be reading this book. Fortunately, there's one thing that everyone can appreciate, and that's a well-written comic, where characterization is pushed to the forefront.

Dude, you're worthy. I you need to read this book is three bucks--or a retailer who doesn't mind you standing at the rack for a while. There's not zombie fan elitism at work here. We all love one another equally.

After reading #18 I was interested to read that the characters themselves dictated the direction of the finished story. What a novel idea! And after re-reading the issue again, I was just wondering whether Mr. Moore's cover revealed your initial intentions for this issue before the characters' intervention?

It revealed SOME of the initial intentions. Rick WAS going to hang Thomas. There was a LOT more that got changed though.

Nice d/fhanger, too. Does this mean they're gonna be leaving the prison? It sure seems as though the group are moving to a different locale for each "arc". First the campsite, then the farm, then the prison. It's kinda like The Littlest Hobo...with zombies...and without a dog.

I am unfamiliar with this "Littlest Hobo" you speak of.

Nice work on the trades for this book too, by the way. I like the way they're released so that anyone that picks up the trade and likes what they read is able to then jump straight into the "monthly" book from where they left off. I got the first two trades, then #13 and haven't looked back, and I'm sure there'll be a stack of people who just got the first two trades and will be onboard for the single issues as of #13. (Incidentally, I've also caught up with Invincible this way, getting the vol.1-4 trades and then picking up #19-21 plus the #0 issue, so now I can keep on with the single issues without missing a beat).

Oh, one last thing: thanks for the character pages this issue. To be honest, I was a little confused by who everyone was while reading the second trade, but after 18 issues I felt a lot more familiar with the characters, but it's a welcome addition with such a big cast. Will it be a semi-regular feature? Maybe run it at the end of each arc to update everyone's situation?

Anyway, I'm done.

Keep up the good work, Kirkoi

Paul Shinn

I shrank the character pages down from six pages to three so I'll probably print it in EVERY issue from now on--just to be on the safe side.

Hi R.K.

"Wow" is the only way I can describe this comic. I used to collect a lot years ago but got bored. I was checking E-bay out for Zombie movies and I noticed someone selling issue 10, 11 of your comic and I thought I would give it a go. Best buy I have made it was so good I went out and bought all the back issues up to 18 the latest. I got them all Monday once I started reading I couldn't stop (great story and art work the best I have ever seen) please keep it going the story line is so good the only bad thing is I have to wait each month for the next issue but hey I have been spoiled.

Have you thought of doing a story within a story of the characters going into depth of their nightmares, the characters are so good it feels like I need to know everything.

Not quite sure what you mean here but we will be focusing on a lot of the characters in a much more in-depth fashion as the series progresses.

I sure hope the sales figures keep rising you're doing a great job in my eyes and I would love to see this continue for a long time.

Best wishes and all the support I can offer

Regards
Damon Thomas

Trust me, Damon... nobody wants to see this book last longer than I do. I hope it NEVER ends.

Dear Robert et al.

Thanks, matey for printing my letter - reading it back I guess it's kinda waffel! Just want to say I love the direction you're taking The Walking Dead - can't wait to find out who the woman on the next cover is with the 2 zombies in tow. Caught your Marvel team-up...nice story with Blade & the Punisher (I used to love Tomb of Dracula & like the way Blade has found a new niche) & have bad-ordered a couple of Brit & Cloudfall to see what the fuss is about. I did have something relevant to write the other day, but can't remember what it was...ah, just remembered! We have a new

Doctor Who series on the BBC, updated for the 21st Century so to speak. The other Sat. night Simon Pegg was the "baddie", tho't you might like to know!

Keep churning out the walking dead!
All the best
Jeff

Cool. We don't get that Doctor Who show here in the states but if we ever do I'll be on the look out for the Simon Pegg episode.

Mr. Kirkman,

I've been reading The Walking Dead since issue #9. I heard a lot about this "great new zombie comic" and decided to check it out. I'm glad I did. It's now my favorite title. I'm hooked! I picked up every issue I could find and both trade paperbacks.

Issue #16 was real good. Carol trying to slip Lori the tongue was a twist. Carol is bisexual? Who said prison couldn't be fun? I thought it was cool to see a "zombie kid" at the fence. It would really suck to be a geriatric zombie with no teeth! (dentures?)

Issue #18 was the best yet. Big surprise! Your cover fooled everyone. Thomas wasn't hanged at all.

Can you recommend any other good comics(zombie or not)?I'm away on the look out for some good titles, but there are literally hundreds of new comics out there. Maybe you can have a small list of comics you think are good on your Letter Hacks page

Well, thanks for the best zombie comic ever. I'm anxiously awaiting #19 and trade paperback #3.

Thanks!
Chad Kanishock

If you'd like to see some suggestions from me on what comics you should be buying go back and read the letters column to issue 17--it's FULL of plugs for other people's books. Winners all!

Kirkman -

1) I can't tell if I'm amused or annoyed that it takes me longer to read your responses in the letters pages than the actual comic. Please advise

Look at the pictures longer--that's what they're there for. The Walking Dead is one of the worstest books on the shelves and it still boasts less words than these letters columns... so it's only natural that they take longer.

2) Why do I love Walking Dead so bad some months and hate it so good others? Please advise.

I got nothing... had this letter run earlier in the letters column I probably would have had a writer response but at this point I can barely feel my fingers and my brain is mush... sorry.

3) Thanks for the bios. Uhm... please advise?

Dan Feesser
(who, like Duane, likes to talk about bodily functions)

You're welcome

Hey guys, congrats on the Eisner noms,

Say what you want about readers turning on Rick, but honestly, I just don't like him anymore. Dan Haskell pretty much summed up my feelings on Rick's recent behavior in his letter in TWD #19 and the end of that chapter sealed the deal for me. Suddenly, I want Rick dead. He's messed up. Passing judgement on a killer who was already incarcerated for his crimes (not his fault a bunch of potential victims decided to move in with him—he's already in prison!), unilaterally creating the law of this new world and then breaking said law? And not just breaking it, but killing Dex in cold blood during the middle of a zombie skirmish? No two ways about it, I want Rick's back shooting, two faced, double talking head on a pike, period.

Come now, it can't be all that bad. We're going somewhere with all this—don't worry.

Now having said that, I should also add that this story is amazing page after page and that just because I don't like Rick anymore doesn't mean I'm not enjoying the hell out of this title. If anything, the fact that I now hate Rick is one of the great things about this story. No one is sacred. If he died, I'd go right on reading this book, rooting for Tyreese, Lori, Glenn and everyone else and feeling a smug sense of satisfaction knowing Rick's pushing up daisies. In fact, if anything, it'd do well for the rest of the series, give us a chance to shine. So feel free to ice the self-righteous bastard, won't bother me none and I guarantee I'll keep reading.

One other thing, Gary Timmons asked: "Any good convention horror stories?" and you answered: "Nah, nothing crazy's ever happened to me." and I thought "Oh, I don't know... I remember that time you got stabbed in the back by a creepy little killer fetus that lived in his twin brother's stomach." Sorry, I just had to chime in with a pug for HACK/SLASH: COMIC BOOK CARNAGE. After all, isn't it exactly what the lad asked for? A good horror story involving Robert Kirkman at a convention? I'm a huge TWD fan (and successful recruiter of new readers, as well) but I thought I'd take the time to show my buddy Tim Seeley some love (he says he needs it). If you like slashers, zombie cats, zombie bimboes, Evil Ernie or would just love to see Robert Kirkman take a dirt nap, pick up HACK/SLASH!

Oh, yeah... I that book totally slipped my mind when it was coming out—I should have plugged it way more. I'm getting very forgetful in my old age. Tim Seeley is a great guy and Hack/Slash is a very entertaining book. If ANYONE could make me enjoy a comic with Evil Ernie in it—it's Tim... but I make no promises on THAT issue. I'm sure it'll be as good as all the rest though.

My Wednesday started out like any other Wednesday. I go to my favorite comic book shop, here in Montreal, QC Canada, and for like the 19th time I see an issue of the Walking Dead, something I've been wanted to check out but haven't (collecting 15+ books a month is a hefty list for a college student) Then I see 3 TPBs sitting on a shelf, I ask my good friend and store manager, what he thinks. He tells me he's getting a lot of great feedback, so I buy the first volume and go to a coffee place near by to read.

I run back to my comic book store after reading it, and buy volume 2 and 3 as well as issue number 19.

HAH!! We got you!!!

They were amazing, I couldn't put them down. I am a zombie fan and a comic book fan. To have a zombie book out there that does the genre justice, is more than just satisfying, it's fucking fantastic.

Everything about the books were great, and true to the zombie genre. The writing is excellent and the art is moving, realistic and just flat out suits the book perfectly.

I just finished number 19 and I am extremely pleased with the series and will continue to read it for as long as you guys keep it going (or up until the zombies start talking, talking zombies are just not cool)

Got it--no talking zombies.

Sincerely,
Jon Maggio

P.S. Congrats to everyone nominated for the Eisner

Thanks so very much, I'm VERY pleased to be--oh wait--oh yeah--I'm sure Charlie Adlard and Tony Moore are very excited.

Hey there,
I've been reading your monthly comic now since the beginning and I had to say the first 12 issues were pretty enjoyable. But now I've come to the realization that I hate you. And I hate your book. You and your book have made it so I no longer look forward to what were my favorite comics. You and your book have ruined my Wednesday afternoons when I sit down at Quixote over a beef dip (hell--beef dip?) and read that latest issues. All I want is TWD, and I hate you for it, you've ruined my hobby. You've taken a much used theme (Zombies) and turned it into some of the best reading I've had in years, and I'm including real books in that. (wait--REAL books?) Your characters are great. I no longer want to be Batman or Wolverine for Halloween, I want to be Rick, or maybe Glen. Anyway I figure I fluffed you enough so answer these questions. (I was kinda hoping after all the fluffing I'd get a nice slow beef dip--but alas, you have let me down.)

1) Is anyone immune to being bit by a zombie? That would be an interesting thing to see, some badass character covered in bite scars.

That seems a BIT too far-fetched for this book.

2) Are they ever going to leave the Georgia area, I feel it's just not safe there, they need to head more northwest, sure the weather is harsher but as we've already seen the cold weather is a great advantage.

How many people died on the way TO the prison? They're not looking to travel any time soon. Plus--they kinda ran out of food last time.

3. Why is the girl with the two zombies' and a sword such a badass? I

know we're
probably going to find out but I can't
wait that long.

She held up in a "Wheaties" factory for about six months. That's about all it took

Keep up the good work. Are you going to be at Wizard World East this weekend, if so I want to buy you a beer or three?

Alas, I was not there--maybe if there had been a "beef dip" in the deal...

Hungry for this book like it's the flesh of the living.
Steve

Not as hungry as I am for a beef dip.

That's all she wrote folks. I'm spent (after all the beef dip jokes) so I've really got nothing to say here... other than be here next month for big events in issue 21 and check out Invincible and Marvel Team-Up if you haven't already.

Oh, and I'll be at the San Diego Comic-Con, Wizard World Chicago, and the Baltimore Comic-Con this year--so look me up, I promise to shake your hand and smile. I'll probably even give the thumbs up way too many times.

See you next month. Same bat time same bat channel.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Well, check that out, Issue #21. And not a day late--well, that's actually a true statement, we're not a day late... slightly more actually, but only slightly. Our scheduling problems as of late are due in part to a busy con season, but also... well, they're my fault. I've been taking a little bit more time on scripts than I should have and because of that, Charlie's been having trouble keeping up. So there, my fault. Sorry about that

But don't worry, we'll get this thing back on track before you know it. I'm completely dedicated to this book. As much if not more so than I've ever been

I do have to mention that one hiccup in what will soon be a two-year run ain't bad. So cut us some slack as we get things back on schedule. We'll love you for it

Last issue in a preposterous letter that asked about the authenticity of a gun on a past cover I jokingly said that Tony Moore is a murderer. Some would argue that murder is not a joking matter and some would be correct. I was totally in the wrong and I accept full responsibility. So please, stop breaking Tony's windows, Tony Moore is NOT a murderer

In the same response I also said that Charlie Adlard was ALSO a murderer, but it turns out that's a complement in the United Kingdom Go figure.

In other news, that big hardcover I mentioned as shipping in November has been pushed back to December, but it'll be shipping in EARLY December so it's practically the same time. It'll be worth the wait though, just you wait and see.

Now, let's answer some of that mail you kids seem to like so much.

Hello Robert

When I first saw the cover for issue #19, I didn't know what to think. For a second I thought you were going to bring in super heroes, UFOs and sexy ninja woman for some reason

But when I read the book my fears were laid to rest. Damn fine stuff as always. I have to admit I love how Rick is evolving as a character. Way back on issue #1 we saw him get a tear in his eye just for shooting a zombie

But here, he blows Dexter away with a "Cry me a river." Rick has definitely changed over time. But is this a good or bad thing? Is he going to become a stronger leader? Or is he going over to the dark side so to speak where he pops anyone who stands against him?

Time will tell I guess. Great work. Glad to hear sales are still going up. I want this book around for a long time

Peace,
Eric L. Busby

This book should be around for a good long time, so no worries there at the moment. Keep an eye on Rick, I think you'll be surprised where he's headed

Hello again

First a big thank you for printing my first letter in issue 18.

This new chick in TWD 19 kicks ass it would be a shame if she got killed too soon. It seems to be a growing trend, you introduce several characters, put focus on one and the rest are fodder but it is handled with genius.

The zombies are looking more gruesome, when Rick first woke and journeyed to Atlanta the zombies he encountered were freshly dead now they're uglier. A few years later with all the weather like snow, rain, heat, wind, they'd be naked and completely gross.

We'll get there, eventual y.

I know you stated this series is zombie movie with the bits before and after the bit we see but every single issue is brilliant, if there were a TV show it would work better in a format like 24, maybe showing a hour of every day for a whole month, show what the characters are doing

Dan

A TV show? That's a brilliant idea

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I think you do a great job handling the unruly people in your Pfc. from your characters to your readers--that's my overly literary way of saying, "zombies good. Letters good."

Sometimes people write in and treat you like shit, and you take it a lot more graciously than I think I would if I were in your place. Another zombie-comic guru writes in to give you a "grade"? Clearly this guy has some kind of chip on his shoulder about being your editor or something. To your credit, you were nice to him, as you are to all of us who don't know how to act. I buy your book, I tell my friends to buy your book, I tell my students--especially my creative writing students--to buy your book, that's MY critique. Keeping up the good work in spite of the peanut gallery is just another testament to your wonderful talent and savvy

You make a good point, but where would I be without the peanut gallery? They can critique my work all day and all night as long as they're paying the price of admission. It's all part of the process

I like the politics notes that the book has been hitting lately. I was really struck when Rick asked for the Mysterious Stranger's sword at the end of #19 and then asked her up. Wow! Talk about your safety versus security metaphor! And you just sort of walk from there right to the more humanistic moment between Rick and Tyreese about the "code of justice." Rick cooked up a while back. I know this sort of talk probably makes you nervous, but you're starting to blaze trails that even Romero left alone... man, I just love the way you work a theme from two different sides, and keep the characters from noticing until it's too late

Thanks.

I just... I can't believe he used the word "grade"? What the hell? As though you were sitting around, sweating bullets, the whole time... Well, the numbers are good, people seem to like it, but what does RALPH GRIFFITH think? He won't return my calls :-)

Sweet zombie Jesus.
--Will Bush (No relation)

I see exactly what you mean. Screw Ralph Griffith.

Robert,

Big fan of The Walking Dead, #19 was another good one -- I can't believe Rick turned the gun on Dexter. That's pure cold-blooded. He's going down quite the dark path, isn't he? And how exact y do you. TAME a zombie? Guess you can teach a dead dog (so to speak) new tricks

About your conversion to the 800clicker DVD system: NOOOO!! Don't support the Evil Empire! You're crazy if you don't go for Netflix. From all reports, Netflix has got a much quicker turnaround (I've been hearing about all kinds of delays through Blockbuster), better selection, WAY better customer service, and, best of all, they aren't owned by a baseball-running, faux "family values" lunatic, whose rental stores refuse to carry NC-17 or unrated titles, and which routine y censor videos with no warning labels on the boxes to indicate so (the versions of John Woo's The Killer and Peter Jackson's Dead Alive they carry are laughable, and Bad Lieutenant? Merely a Somewhat Naughty Lieutenant, if you rent it at Blockbuster)

I have never had a Netflix account so I can't really comment on their service. I will say that from my experience Blockbuster hasn't had any delays. I've rarely waited more than two days since the return of a movie before I get my next one. Also, on the NC-17 thing, I don't know how the actual stores are, but the online version of Blockbuster DOES rent NC-17 movies and UNRATED movies. So there. Now, let's talk about some zombies, kay?

Had to get that out of my system

Don't sweat it.

I appreciated the cast pages last issue, but again this issue I found myself looking at a couple of characters and thinking, "Now, who is that guy again?" Since you're not running an ad on the inside front cover anyway, you might want to think about running an

of characters there every issue. It sure would help this fella out. My brain, she don't remember names and faces so well anymore, especially with a month downtime between seeing those names and faces.

We're running the character pages every issue now. See?

Speaking of brains (here we go). I thought you might want to check out my new website, *Zombie Eat Brains*: <http://hungryzombie.blogspot.com/>

I'll see if I can get around to checking that out. In the meantime, enjoy the pig

All the horror blogs out there, not to mention your fine com c, are presented from the point of view of the surviving humans. But who speaks for the poor zombie? The poor, mindless, ravenous, brain-eating zombie? Well, now I do!

It's very funny. No. I've been to 6. And you don't like it. What is it, like, two minutes out of your life? Come on! (Start from the oldest entry)

It's been up and running less than a week now (I backdated a bunch of entries to have a generous backlog of content for new visitors), and a mention in your letters column sure would help get the word out about it. And if you don't wanna, then I guess you delete my email, I never hear back from you, no harm done. I promise I won't stop buying your com c. (Maybe)

Thanks,
Tom Collins

Okay, enough about the damn website- let's get back to the subject at hand. THIS BOOK. Oh, your letter is already over. Damn.

Kirkman and co.

This Book Kicks. ASS!!

Most books that my local comic store (Dragon's Tale in Neptune Beach) tends to recommend are super-hero centric. So I was a bit surprised by all these things I was hearing about a fresh new zombie book. Now I've always loved zombie movies, but I'd never read a comic about the fuckers that grabbed my interest. Until TWD, that is. I was content to flip through an issue here or there at the beginning, but I was too busy buying the same old crap from Marvel and DC that I had been reading for years. Anyways, you know the story. I wised up, dropped a bunch of dead weight books, and dove head first into TWD, beginning with the first two trades, and then the single issues.

It's good to have you.

Now that all of that is out of the way, I have one thing to say about you, Robert. YOU'RE A SICK BASTARD! I thought for sure the only characters that were safe in this book were Carl, Sophia, and Herschel's twins. Shows what I know. OK, so if even little kids are expendable, I ask you this: Is there ANYONE in this book that you consider "safe"? Even if you don't want to say who it is, I'm just curious. I'd go with Herschel. After all, how much horrifying shit can happen to one guy?

Well, nobody is safe. There are times where a character like Herschel might get a pass based on all this shit I've already put him through but that's it. There are no characters I've sat down at said "I'm never killing that guy" about. Now I DO have long running plans for a few characters so they're safe for a while-but I've already changed my mind on a couple long running characters already like Donna.

Here's hoping this book continues for over 100 issues, or at least ends with an issue of two pages of people dying and twenty pages of zombies standing around. Or a lens!

Keep it up, you sick, sick man.
Chris Carroll

Man, when we get to the last issue (however long that takes) I'm TOTALLY doing that death on pages 1 and 2 and 20 pages of zombies thing. That's so totally awesome. Don't worry, none of you will be reading the book then. We'll be two years past aliens by that point.

Thanks again for another great issue, Deadmen. For a while, I thought I might be reading the wrong book, with all those pages having no word bubble and all. Yet, despite all the action, we still get some great characterization with the high-light of course being Rick taking out Dexter. That moment reminded me of so many other comics, movies, and shows where I thought someone needed to take advantage of a situation to eliminate a threat, but the never do. I was very glad to see Rick actually do something to end the problem they were having with Dex when he got the opportunity. Rick's really starting to take control and handle problems the way he wants to regardless of what others will think. I can see this forming a rift among the clan in the prison with Rick leading one group and maybe Lori leading a more pacifist group.

What I didn't understand in this issue is how Dex could get into the armory and back out without seeing any of the zombies that ended up attacking everyone. He'd have to run into some of them on his way to or from the armory, so he'd want to make sure he locked it up when he left. I guess it worked well for the story, so I shouldn't complain, but it seemed a little unbelievable to me (although I don't seem to have a problem accepting the fact that the word is full of zombies).

Well, Dexter did know the prison really well. So he was able to get to the armory with little to no resistance. Personally I think Tyreese killing all those zombies in the gym is a little more unbelievable but if you want to latch on this one, more power to you.

The new girl in the camp is a really very interesting. I can't wait to find out where she came from and what she's been doing since the zombie plague began. Has she been alone all along, or is she the sole survivor of a larger group? How will she feel being part of this new group where Rick is always in charge? She seems like a dominant personality, so I wouldn't be surprised to see a power struggle between her and Rick. I also can't imagine that she'll appreciate being

treated like a prisoner for very long. Her arrival just opens up so many great possibilities, that I can't wait to see how it plays out.

The cover for your next issue looks very interesting as well. I know Rick and Lori have been growing apart, but I didn't expect them

already (at least it appears that is what is going to happen based on the cover). What could happen in the next issue that causes such an abrupt separation? Does Lori somehow find out what Rick did to Dex and not appreciate Rick "taking the law into his own hands?" I'm not sure how she would find out, so it seems like it must be something else... I really can't think of what, but I can't wait to find out! I can't think I've ever looked forward to each issue of a book in my life. You're just doing a tremendous job here!

Now, get to work on some posters for us! I've already got spots picked out on my wall to put up a few, so quit making us wait!

Thanks for all your great work!
Jim Amato

Posters huh? I'll have to look into that.

This is the first letter I've ever written to a comic, honestly. Could it be possible that #19 was the darkest issue yet? I think so. I really didn't expect Rick to murder the nutty prisoner, and I had to go back and re-read those pages. It was such a shock. Nice work all around, chaps. It's certainly the best zombie comic book I've ever read.

Oh, when are you going to do a *Walking Dead*/*Jack* Staff crossover?

kelvin green

I have to do *Invinob*/*Jack* Staff first

Mr. Kirkman and Letter Hacks,

I have recently returned to reading comic books after an eleven-year break. To be frank, I was pretty much looking for some bathroom reading material a few months ago when I stumbled upon my comic book collection from when I was ten years old. After rereading the *Death of Superman* and *Maximum Carnage* story arcs for the first time in eleven years, I decided comics were good reading material (and trust me, I mean this as a compliment) for the crapper.

I went to a local comic store, looking to update my comic library, and I picked up some of the current mainstream titles. I have to say, I was pretty impressed. I wasn't completely blown away by any of these titles, but I was satisfied with their quality and figured they were about as good as comics could get. That was until I picked up *The Walking Dead*.

I had glanced at an article about your book on the "comics" page of the IGN website, in which they claimed that this is the best zombie book on the market. A huge Romero fan myself, I picked up the first two trade paperback volumes to give the series a try. I finished those two books in one sitting. I quickly went out the next day to pick up the third volume and issue #19. I couldn't get enough.

As a Romero fan, this is exactly what I have been looking for: Character-driven zombie literature. I do not use the term "literature" loosely. This is more than just your average comic, it is art.

The characters are brilliant: you have done a great job at developing them into believable people. You are able to fully utilize every member of your cast, and if there is a character that is just taking up space for one reason or another, you know exactly the right time to kill them off. Brilliant!

What I like the best about this book, especially as it progresses, are the moral "shades of grey" (which match the artwork) that emerge. It is fitting that a black and white rule such as "you kill, you die" has been cast aside about as quickly as that bullet which passed through Dexter's head. The moral struggles keep this work extremely interesting.

Well that is all that I have to say. This is my first time writing to a comic because, well, I was ten years old the last time I was reading comics. I just want to express my appreciation for all of the excellent work. Oh, and so you know, I hold my TWD collection in such high regard; it has gone nowhere near my bedroom. It's just that good.

From a devoted TWD fan,
Brad Dean

Thanks. But y'know... I think comics are MEANT for the bathroom. So please, don't deny your copies of *The Walking Dead* the joy of sitting through a good poop with you. When you do that, you deny them their reason for existing. That's like not allowing a lion to eat antelope or whatever or not allowing Tony Moore to terrorize things. Y'know, since he's a terrorist and all.

Dear Kirkman,

After the events of issue 18, I didn't know how you were going to write your way out of that situation. But you pulled it off with the age-old method of throwing zombies at the problem.

See, you guys are starting to catch onto the formula.

The first draft of this letter was all about Land of the Dead, which should be out by the time this letter is printed (That's pretty presumptuous isn't it--who says I'm going to print this letter?) Needless to say, damn it'll be great. This should be another good year for zombie flicks (aside from Romero's masterpiece). Movies like *Risen*, *Undead*, *House of the Dead 2*, *St. Elmt* (are there zombies in that?), *The Day of the Living Dead: The Curse of the Moya* (ok, maybe not that one), *Return of the Living Dead IV* and *V* (err...), *Worst Case Scenario* (is this out?), and *Zombies* (but Hooper's movie may be out next year).

I like the idea of the mysterious woman's zombie guards. Our group should employ some. Maybe form a little contingent of zombies, like the whole Manchurian incident in 1942. Seriously, Max Brooks is brilliant.

Maybe I SHOULD read that book

1 Will we be seeing the zombies "getting smarter" soon?

Nope.

2. I asked this in Inevitable, but could you fantasy cast your ideal TWD movie? Come on, Simon Pegg as Rick!

You think he could play Rick? Really? He's a fantastic actor... but Rick? I mean, Nick Frost MAYBE but not Simon. :-)

3. Can we see more of Sleepwalker? Please: (ok sorry, wrong book, but I've already been printed there once. :)

THROKI,
Chris Pitts

Sleepwalker is in Team-Up 9 and 10 and will be returning for the "LEAGUE OF LOSERS" story arc that will be running from issues 15-18. You're n LUCK! I love that guy

Hey Robert--

I got issue 19 last week (loved it... duh), and realized that I'm still thinking about issue 18 so I figured I'd write. I just wanted to tell you how much I loved the split between what the cover was promising and what actually went down. I know, it wasn't a panned... but boy did it make the whole thing feel alive and dangerous. I (like you, apparently) had been waiting since the end of the previous issue for a hanging, and then shit just started spinning out of control. I guess what I'm saying is, thanks for letting the characters take the lead and doing what's ultimately best for the comic.

Yeah, it sure was fun, but I'll be damned if I didn't make writing 19, 20, and this issue a pain in the ass. I mean... I had to change my entire plan

Now that I'm writing, let me make a few more comments. Issue 19. Right-fucking-on. I'm pretty much sure for whatever; I'm feeling really well taken care of by your storytelling. So when you slow it down for a couple of issues, I'm digging it. Now, you're throwing a kick-ass babe with a sword into the mix, well that's fuckin' fun as hell. Can't wait to see how she develops. And the closing note between the guys discussing the practical and moral implications of murder -- I mean, this is what it would get to if you were in a situation like this, right? The Walking Dead continues to be a deeply satisfying ride.

I'd also like to add my two cents to something Corby Dan el brings up in LetterHacks, about the resurgence of horror being a reflection of the times. I totally agree, the uncertainty of the times, both in our ability to make do in our everyday lives and abroad, draw us to scenes of horror, both as distraction and catharsis. By getting close to a scary situation that is controllable (you can always leave the theater, shut off the TV, close the book) we feel some small mastery over the fears we have every day about survival. But within that larger genre of horror, it is also no coincidence that zombies have returned. I don't think it's simply that 28 Days Later was popular and now is being copied (that's not aimed at you, Kirkman). (better not be) Zombies resonate potently with the specific fears of our times. They are in the zeitgeist for a reason, and they've been coming for a while. Specific monsters relate, or resonate, specifically to different kinds of fears. I'm not sure if a close reading of history bears this theory out, but you have body snatchers and space aliens in the Fifties, during the fear of communism, and now we are being overrun by zombies. Elvise Barker has this to say on the subject:

Zombies are the liberal nightmares. Here you have the masses, whom you would love to love, appearing at your front door with the faces falling off; and you're trying to be as humane as you possibly can, but they are, after all, eating the cat. And the fear of mass activity, of mindlessness on a national scale, underlies [the] fear of zombies

We live in zombie times. Fear of the mob, of the other, of the "rest of the world" (or of the red/blue states) losing their goddamn minds and pulling the few among us left living sane lives -- pulling us from all sides into the pit of madness -- goes to the core for us right now. As the nation continues to polarize, and the "other side" is seen as increasingly dangerous and difficult to understand (from either side), a world in which humanity itself dies only to rise up and tear the flesh from our very limbs seems less like fantasy and more like allegory.

Not to say that zombies can have only one meaning. Interestingly, in the UK, when fear of mad cow disease was rampant, the film Dead Creatures seemed to quietly address itself to that particular concern, not the more common point of view of fear of the external, but from an internalized POV -- fear of the self. Cool little movie. Tweaks the Pittsburgh conventions in a fun way.

Couple of random parting shots... I've been seeing the TPBs at the top of Amazon's horror graphic novel best-seller list. All three of them, right at the top, one-two-three (or, technically, three-one-two). That's great news (for all of us) Congratulations! Here's to TPBs number seven, eight, nine, and ten!

They're on the way, to be sure.

About the poster... would it be a Tony Moore poster or a Charlie Adlard poster? Talk about a toughie. My vote is for one of each. I know, some kind of crass, economic science of diminishing returns will probably get in the way of my dream. Tony's cover to issue 9, with Rick reflected in a zombie's eye, in full-ass color, and a Charlie drawn poster, more overtly depicting zombies, in black and white, maybe with some color in the text. With dreams as specific as these, it's hard for them not to get dashed. But I, for one, would pony up for one of each (support).

Oh, yeah, and about MTU. It's like hanging out at your pal's day job. I always feel like whispering to someone, "Psst, I know this guy..." I know what he's really into..." Love the light tone. Keep it up. And more Moon Knight! The title should be MTUWKK

Heh, actually, I think THIS book is the stretch. MTU is what I'm REALLY like, silly, fun, retarded

It really just keeps getting better and better (talking about TWD now...), and I can't wait to see where we're headed next

Take care, man,
Andrew Garcia-Price

Thanks for the kind words, and the Clive Barker quote. That's a good one, thanks for sharing

Dear Letter Hacks,

Finally, someone realizes the joy of

killing characters in comics. There are no actors to deal with, no need to hire new people to replace them. I don't understand why every comic doesn't see the light. I'd kill off X-men every day and never bring 'em back. So many other comics live in fear of losing their fan base by killing off some super hero that a bunch of people like. Screw that shit. Comics are a great medium of story telling because the on y boundary is the writer and the artist's imagination. And drawing ability, I guess. If I had a comic, it would be a bunch of crappy stick figures with chinsaws. I just finished #19 and thought it was the most interesting yet. I like the whole prison scene so far. The introduction of the new sword-wielding woman was great! Zombie pets are a good idea. Just cut off all the parts that could hurt you and lead them around to keep the other zombies at bay. I hope to see a scene where every character has a pet zombie

Tyrese is my favorite character. He seems to know that they're all fucked anyway, so he might as well make the best of it. Rick is a good main character, but he's a cop, and I don't trust or like cops as a general rule. Cops need order, their job is to keep everything in the green. But this whole zombie situation is going to need people that live in the red. Rick can't keep everybody civilized. He can't even keep himself civilized, even though he's trying. What I really dig about your book so far is that people don't have to be bitten by a zombie to become one. Hell yeah! That's some scary shit, knowin' that you could die of the flu and then get up and start eating folks. There are a lot of bald zombies, but the hair would probably be some the first bits to go as you walk around for miles rotting away. My wallet thanks you for the cheaper trades. I can hardly pay for food sometimes, let alone a \$25 dollar trade paperback. Keep up the killing and I'll be there to read about it.

-Zach Michealis

Yeah, a lot of people talk about our cheap \$10 volume 1 TPB but even the other volumes at \$13 are super cheap for a six issue TPB. Most trades containing six issues are \$16 to \$19. We're doing our best to give back to the fans in every way we can. We're cool like that.

Dear Robert

The newest arrival to the cast of The Walking Dead is a strutting package of cool. Perhaps a bit too much. Urban. Dressed to impress. Dreadlock hairdo. She even hands us a katana, the samurai long sword. Definitely a hip thing. She also has that cold "don't fuck with me" attitude. Is she a former lawyer? She also carries something usable. New data. By removing the lower jaw and the arms, she rendered her "escorts" harmless. A sort of zombie neutering. She was also able to roam among "roamers" with relative comfort. Hmmm.

Rick's cold-blooded murder of Dexter was logical but kind of hard to take. Now that he is in a secure setting he must wrap his head around rules and a work agenda. Otherwise, he'll continue down the road to insanity

Nice to see Otis again.

I love TWD. I love Charlie's artwork, and I love it in B, W and grays. BUT each time I see a Tony Moore cover, I feel a need to see a full color Dead long story. Be it an annual or a graphic novel.

Nah. Color would just wreck things

The Land of the Dead trailer looks great, doesn't it? Hope it does real well so Romero will get the financial legs, so we won't have to wait so long between movies.

Keep up the great work

Victor Rosario Fermin.

Yeah, I think the single best thing that came out of Land of the Dead was the possibility of MORE Romero zombie flicks. If he doesn't do at least ONE more sequel I'm going to be very disappointed

Dear Letter hacks (the best letters page...ever),

I've been following this book and Mr. Kirkman since I read the 2009 relaunch. I have gone back and bought the wholeset. This is the only non-Marvel book I get

WOW really? The 2009 books are what got you into my work? REALLY?Y! Heh. That's pretty cool. Welcome aboard. You should try INVINCIBLE, though--if you like the Marvel stuff.

I've just read issue 19. I must admit I was weary of the cover -- a woman with 2 zombies now makes sense in the walking dead universe -- but just looks a bit too "out there". Anyway after reading this looks to be a great arc -- I thought they would have to move on from the prison but no Rick killed Dex. This was a big surprise for me. As for the ending -- yeah its about time the "You kill you die" was addressed. I mean Tyrese killed his daughter's boyfriend, nothing was said will this be detailed later?

Well, yeah. Of course

Anyway time for my fave zombie movies

- 1 - Dawn of the dead original
- 2 - Night of the living dead original
- 3 - Dead alive/Breadhead -- the energy of the film is insane

Ok now I have a couple of questions.

- 1 - what do you think would happen if this happened in the Marvel universe? Persons I believe there wouldn't be many heroes left. Who would you pick as survivors? I'd have to pick Punisher for his survival instinct) and Cage (unbreakable skin) Who would you think would be left?

I've been thinking about this a lot lately, actually.

- 2 - I hope you never get bored with this book - I could see this becoming Rick's son's book once Rick passes on

anyone else
want to end up the badass
she seems to have become?

You
think Carl's really
going to live that long?

3 - If Romero was to offer to make a movie/TV show of TWD you'd be interested?

Why? You got his number?

4 - Would you ever let anyone else write this book?

No

Anyway I've taken a ton of your time.

I hope to god you print this

Thanks for the great books

Craig "Buhbunrayspidey" Lowrey

That to that "GOD" guy... I'm printing your letter Make sure you thank him

Kirkman,

Do you remember the days when whole issues would pass without anyone being killed? I know you just doing this to piss me off, I'm that important to you.

Those days will be here again Nobody died in this issue right?

That said I'm not sorry to see Dexter go. The cast is having enough trouble building a safe haven without him walking around all twitchy and dangerous. I'm a little sad that Andrew got away and I fear that he will bring more trouble to Rick and the gang in days to come.

Love the new woman I think she'll be a great asset to the team Her idea of using "declared" zombies to move freely on the outside is pure genius. I hope to see other creative uses for the dead in the future. Her use of a sword also shows good judgement. With the tools available to them the others could probably fashion swords as well, or some sword like weapons that will be more effective in killing the dead.

I'm concerned about Rick. First he tried to kill a man with his bare hands, and then killed of Dexter. The risk is that he's started down a long slippery slope. A problem with soldiers who have seen a lot of close quarters combat is that killing becomes too easy for them. This gets them into trouble when they have to deal with a civilized society again. Rick went from fighting side by side with Dexter to killing him in a second. There wasn't much thought between opportunity and action and even afterwards he didn't seem overly upset and I think even Rick fears how easy it was.

I normally don't comment on letters in Letter Hacks but I have to say something about Ralph Griffith's critique of the art in Walking Dead. A C+/B-? Is he reading the brain version of the book? I personally couldn't imagine the art being any better (Page 8, issue 19 was particularly good). Griffith's just being pissy because he put out a book that nobody's ever heard of so he has to find something to criticize about Walking Dead. C+...

Yeah fuck that guy!! Heh

I can't wait to see what happens next, keep up the good work, fuck you for killing those little girls, and glad to hear that the book keeps selling better and better

Not as happy as we are, I'll bet.

Ken Lindgren
Rochester, MN

P.S. I've got a Marvel Team Up Question Now I know in your run on the book you've often had more than two hero's team up in the book, or at least had two teams of two heroes meet up take down the bad guys. But when the previews come out there are never more than two heroes (or one hero and one super-team) advertised for the book. Is this just tradition? Could there be an MTU where Cadaver, Maverick, and Turbo (can anyone think of three other heroes?) all team up, or are you contractually obligated to keep the number at two?

It's just easier for the artist to draw two characters instead of more. The covers for 11 and 13 feature a group of characters You happy now?

Dear Robert et al,

Well, if I'm going to read these lengthy letters pages I might as well try and get into one of them

#19 was the most exciting comic that came out that week, and in a market where Grant Morrison is writing five titles at once that's pretty remarkable work. Could it be that, now Rick has crossed some line by shooting Dexter, he's going to snap out of this delusion he's been slipping into? Ever since they found the prison, Rick's been kidding himself that he can rebuild civilization single handedly, that he can apply all the old rules to a new situation. This mania seemed to peak with his planned "execution" of Thomas, where Rick seemed to think that, if he dressed it up as an official killing, it would be any better than just shooting the mad bastard

Blowing Dexter away seems to have brought the new situation home. For now, there's only one rule - see threat, eliminate threat. But what constitutes a threat? They're already locking up any 'strangers' over night, but how do we know the regulars are any less likely to go over the edge, especially after all they've lost? What do they do to people who take too much food, or leave the wrong gate open - both actions that could endanger the wider group?

The arrival of nina girl in #19 might help to bring Rick, and the other members of the group, back to their senses. She seems to have adapted to the situation in a pragmatic but ruthless way (love the way she decapitates her pet zombies with one swipe once they're served their purpose), but does

Congratulations on the Eisner noms. As someone who came to the book "because" of Charlie Adlard (I've been a fan since his 'X-Files' and 'Doctor Who Yearbook' days), it's a pleasure to see him get recognition. Tony's covers are pretty special as well, and well worth the attention. Here's hoping for a writing nod next year, huh? (yeah, no shit) It can only be a matter of time. Although, knowing how slow these award things can be, you'll probably win it after the aliens have been introduced and the book has gone to hell

Until that happy day, this remains my favourite comic.

Cheers,
Mark Clapham

Thanks

Hi Robert, Charlie, Cliff & Tony

Just thought you (& other George A. Romero/Simon Pegg fans) might be interested to know, that George A. Romero was so impressed by "Shaun of the Dead" (according to my daily paper), that he gave Simon Pegg & Edgar Wright (his mate in both Spaced & Shaun) cameo's in "Land of the Dead". "Yeah, huh?"

You didn't disappoint with the women with sword & 2 chained zombies episode BTW - very good, though I thought she might have been loathe to give up her weapon so quickly

Dude, she just wanted into the safe place. There's not much she wouldn't have done.

Anyway, can't wait for the next issue (& even more so for #25!). The great thing about The Walking Dead being occasionally late is the surprise I get when the comic shop lady, Debbie hands me the latest copy when I walk through the door. My other fave title (apart from the Bendis/Maleev run on DD) is "Strangehaven" which comes out twice a year if you're lucky, but usually just once! Well worth waiting for as is TWD.

That's one way of looking at it.

And before I go, I got a little stack of back issues today through the post of DH Zombie World. Haven't read them yet...you heard these? Take care & just keep on doing what you do best

Jeff

Heard of Zombie World? I wrote the introduction to the new Trade Paperback coming from Dark Horse

I'll have to say that you have an excellent book all the way around. I'm in the intermediate stages of producing a comic book. I'd like to know who designed your 'Walking Dead' cover logo. Thanks, keep up the good work.

Dave

The Walking Dead logo was designed by Brett Evan's, Image's director of production. He's also designed the logos for Invincible, Tech Jacket, Capes, Cloudfall, and Birt

This right here is my first official letter to any comic and I felt you guys deserve it the most. I remember seeing The Walking Dead #1 and picking it up flipping thru the pages and loving every min of it. I only read three comics yours, a certain group of reality hoppers, and a man who loves to use his boorn stick (ok that sounded kinda gross) I love the story and the cover art (that's what attracted me to the comic in the first place. Well keep up the good work.

Shane
p.s. Please put this on Letter Hacks!

OK!!

Dear Walking Dead.

The Walking Dead #18 made me prepared for the upcoming George Romero movie "Land of the Dead". Seeing our heroes behind the prison gate as the zombies rip flesh apart and entrails flying all over, leaves a dark mark on the mind. These zombies are always in a feeding frenzy, they are savage beyond any known reason. The living needs to stay focus and fight these monsters, but when they fight amongst themselves and decide to separate is the worst mistake ever. Divides they will truly fail. What the hell are they doing? Those echong words, get the fuck out of my house, gave me the shivers! I see bad things on the horizon, very bad things. I just wonder why Michael Jackson isn't part of the undead, the man looks like a walking

corpse, whiter than any zombie, has falling body parts (such as his nose), I mean isn't Michael Jackson a zombie? Think about putting Michael in the story, food for thought. I can now see Michael and a group of zombies doing a line dance to the song "Thriller"... wheeeeeee heeeeee, heeeeee!

Sincerely yours,
Paul Dale Roberts

Michael Jackson appears in the background of almost every issue, dude Pay attention

Hey there, Mr. Kirkman--
You mentioned googling zombie toothpaste, the strangest zombie product you know... piqued my interest, but I couldn't find the darned thing. Was this a real product, or ineffective facetiousness? Seriously, I can't stop my zombies' teeth from falling out. (Or their eyes, arms, etc.).

By the way, any thoughts on Romero's upcoming movie? I'm psyched, but I'm afraid it might suck. Won't hurt your business, though, I'm sure. Peace

Mered Parnes

You're obviously just not looking hard enough. Try again

Let me start off by saying that I simply

love the book. It is an utter right at the end of the tunnel for us major zombie fanatics! Zombies just don't get their dues in movies and especially comic books. Deadwood made absolutely no sense. Land of the Dead really blew chunks too (utter disappointment considering Romero was attached). I've seen so many "zombie" serials which actually just suck harder than Jim Neighbors did on Liberace!

In regards to Issue 18, Tracy Kent wrote about rigor mortis in the letters column. Before people start in with "how the hell would you know?!" My credentials: I used to work for a mortuary handling removals, dressing cases and the like, even so far as handling the County Coroner contracts where we bagged the bodies and then took them from the scene to the county fridge. Well over 1000.

Let me clarify something once and for all as I'm tired of people stating this. While Tracy is somewhat right about what he says in regards to Rigor Mortis, he is also wrong. True rigor sets in after the deceased has been such for a prolonged period of time. True, this renders the corpse all but immobile. BUT, the effects are only temporary. Corpses fall out of rigor after a few days. The corpses then become pliable again and is a further step towards decomposition. This is also a key factor in the Coroner's timetable in determining how long the deceased has been such.

Sorry it took so long to write in

Sincerely,
Reaper
Editor-in-Chief
The NAM: National Airsoft Magazine

P.S. Every October, we host an airsoft event for the Halloween season called Operation: Biohazard which gives people the chance to live the zombie experience...from both sides! <http://www.nationalairsoftmagazine.com/biohazardhome.htm>.

Thanks for all that cheerful talk rigor mortis. Maybe I should be checking these links out before plugging them, eh? Maybe... maybe later.

Letter Hacks,

First off, let me congratulate Charlie Adlard and Tony Moore on their Eisner nominations.

Second, let me congratulate Robert Kirkman for making "the must list" in issue 826/827 of Entertainment Weekly (page 74). I love their magazine and think that you really deserve the honor.

I am still digging the book. I still can't wait to get the next issues. Still love the characters, covers (a poster of issue 18 would be framed and hung in the house), art and basically the whole damn thing!

You mentioned in the letters column that you fickers better like the letters columns. I assure you, I love the letters column and I know that a friend of mine 3 states away does too. Whenever we talk, we end up talking about TWD.

I really liked issue 19. When 18 had finished I was kind of shocked that Dexter was kicking everyone out. I recall in one of the letter hacks (around the mid-tens) you saying that the prison was going to be around for a while. Now that I have finished 19, it doesn't look like they are going anywhere anytime soon.

Yeah, I should keep a closer eye on my comments here so that I can make sure I don't spoil any future cliffhangers from now on.

I honestly want to see them in the prison for a bit longer. I've read some of the readers want them on the run and in danger the whole time. That is always good entertainment, but I have always liked the challenge characters face when trying to rebuild their lives after a catastrophe. I still say that this is why the original Dawn of the Dead was better than the remake. They tried to "live" in the Mall even with a baby on the way. They tried to create a sense of normalcy knowing the hordes of zombies are out there. In the remake, it was like they were just waiting it out. I think there is a lot more you can do in the prison with your characters, than you can on the run.

I agree.

I like how you encourage your readers to write in with questions and the fact that you answer them. I know there must be a lot that you just can't fit into the book, but you filling us in with what we ask about is the biggest reason I read the letter hacks. A lot of people have had some good questions that I didn't even bother to think about, you answer them, I go back and read your books again (usually for the 3rd time). So, of course, I have a few more questions for you.

1) How in the hell did Andrew manage to find his way into A block if it was locked down? (or was that what Dexter wanted everyone to think, but it was just crawling with zombies)

The prison is more or less completely unlocked now that the electricity is out. Also, the guards just act before they abandoned the place was to set the prisoners free so they could fend for themselves and after that they left the place more or less unlocked.

2) After Andrew managed to get into A block, how did he get past all the Zombies to get the guns and get back out alive?

Dexter was with him, and he knew the area pretty well. Luck was on their side as well.

3) Most importantly, why in the hell didn't Andrew (I'm seeing a pattern here) tell Dexter about all the zombies? Dexter seemed quite surprised to see them, (or did Andrew mess up, and forget to lock up behind him?)

A-Block is a pretty big place. Roamers only roam if they have something to roam to. Dexter and Andrew could have traveled to the armory in A-Block when all the zombies were spread out inside. They could have only encountered one or two zombies on the way there and on the way out. But all the zombies in the place would have heard them and would have started moving toward them, to the door that Andrew left open. Why he left the door open is still up for debate, and may even be revealed somewhere down the line... I mean, I had to keep Andrew alive for a reason right?

4) If Andrew was cunning enough to get in, get some guns and get out, does this mean we are going to see him again? He could really become quite a pain to the writers if he wants revenge on Rick

for taking his home and killing his lover.

All will be revealed (hey, I gotta get something from Bendis for putting my number on NEWSARAMA)

(Questions done)

I really like the addition of the female character in 19. We have referred to her as the zombie tamer, but I'm sure you will give her a name. I think the possibilities with this character are endless. She's another woman. She's been out in the world and survived. She could make things better or make them worse. Only you, know and I'm sure you won't let us down.

You also mentioned "Hershe" is very religious. You'll be hearing more from him on the subject as time goes on." Thanks! Hershe is one of my favorite characters and it's nice to know that you have plans, other than zombie food, for him.

See, that's what I mean... I never should have said that. Forget I said that. Hershel could die at any moment. I swear.

I am SO glad to hear the book is on solid ground.

Keep up the good work (even if it comes out late)

Mike Ginnem
Wauson, OH

P.S., I told myself that I wouldn't write in to a comic book again, but your book is just THAT good. Damn you for making me embrace my geek-hood.

Welcome to the dark side, GEEK!

Kirkman,

Well yeah this is my first letter to a comic and all that and the book is really great and all sorts of compliments you've heard a million times before. My main reason for writing is to be an annoying fan and point out that those two armless zombies that got their heads cut off in issue 19 by that new character mysteriously grew arms when they were laying dead on the ground. Now maybe there is something in the zombie mythology that I missed that explained this but I do not know (if zombies started immediately regenerating that would just make things crazy). It just struck me as odd to see something like that get through without someone saying "Hey those zombies don't have arms!". Maybe 20 years from now when the whole alien arc is through you can go back and do special editions adding in an mated side kicks and removing extra appendages. Oh and while I am here let me compose a list of questions.

You didn't know cutting the head off a zombie made them grow arms? How do you think all those four armed corpses keep popping up? Read the handbook, silly.

1) Pretty early on the characters started referring to the zombies as zombies. They just automatically knew what they were. Does this mean that they live in a world that contains Romero films and fiction zombie stories previous to the incident? It didn't seem like they had to come up with the word on their own. Well that is really the only question I have but I felt like making a list none the less. Everything about the book is great. Thanks

-Dustin Sims

The term "zombie" existed long before Romero's movies. I think of this book taking place in our world. Only their October 2003 went a little different than ours (that's when I picture this book starting). So with that in mind... all our movies would have existed for them. I doubt anyone in the book so far is a Romero fan. I mean, they certainly haven't MENTIONED anything.

Dear Dead Heads

I don't think you guys need to be told that the book is great but I'll do it anyway. Great book...love the artwork, love the story. This is the best comic since Valiant comics. The story comes first and that's what is most

important. I know that you don't want to water down TWD but I would love a mini series about anything...anything? The beginning of the outbreak would be great to see Shane as a good guy would be cool. Now that I'm done sucking up, I'll get to the point. I want to be a zombie. Is there any way for me to send a picture of myself and be drawn as a zombie? I'd love to be one of the zombies that kills a major character. If at all possible I would also like to buy the artwork of the comic I would be in.

Thanks for writing a great book.
Jason

I'll have to think about that whole having real people appear as zombie thing. I could talk to Charlie about it. Maybe we'll run a contest.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I just finished reading Walking Dead #19. A truly great issue!! I really dug the cover to this one. Before reading it I was thinking "Wow! Who is this bad-ass chick with the sword?" I really like Tony Moore's art, but I'm in no way complaining about Charlie Adlard's, just try to keep Tony on the covers as long as you can. They're truly cool! And also, applause to you for creating such a great story. This book is excellent and the writing is great, not just an awesome zombie story, but a story that I think people who aren't especially into zombie stuff could enjoy, too, if they'd give it the chance. Bottom line: This story is great!! It's really turning into the "zombie movie that never ends" vision that you mentioned in the introduction of the first trade. Again, kudos to YOU, Mr. Moore, Mr. Adlard, Mr. Rathbun, and anyone else who has helped make this book what it is. In this great tale that's got us all begging for more at the end of each issue.

And now the quest ions:

1. In the above-mentioned introduction to the first trade (and forgive me if you've already addressed this) you said that you wanted this book "to be a chronicle of years of Rick's life". Is this still the case? You mentioned that no character is safe and I just wondered if this pertained to Rick as well. Is this truly Rick's story? Maybe (FAR in the future hopefully) you'll end the series with Rick as getting killed. Maybe he'll be

The
Right Reverend Potere O.
Occulto III

Man, a lot of URL plugs in this issue

Dear Kirkman,
Issue 19... "Cry me a river"... holy shit, I laughed out loud at that one. Rick's becoming quite the psycho... that's neat. And that katana-wielding chick is definitely cool. A cool thing. Is Rick going to nail her? Ah, well, I guess we'll see... LAND OF THE DEAD... how... disappointing??? I'm not really sure how I feel about it yet. It was not as good as the wicked DAWN remake, that's for b ody sure. What did you think? You're into that zombie stuff, right? Here're some critiques on LAND - Hey, don't have the TUCKER character from the remake of DAWN be a lead zombie. It just distracts. Plus that guy's a bad Canadian actor. I'm Canadian so I can say that. And also don't have that other cheerleader zombie be an actress from a zillion commercials. Did you recognize that bouncy pony-tailed cheerleader zombie from the "Rolo-chocolate-cone" and "Peak Freans" ads? Stupid.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? Are these Canadian commercials? Who watches THOSE?

What did you think about the zombie's having... like... "feelings". Like when that gas-pumping zombie put that other flaming zombie out of its misery... was that weird? I thought so. I thought if Romero was going to make the zombies smarter, that would be cool and scary, but they're so evolved that they're just like regular people, except they eat skin. Ehn...not so scary. Leguizamo was basically the best thing in the movie. Oh, there's a movie called, The Ghouls, with a few actors that people would recognize, and it's about zombies... have you seen it? Don't. Anyway, I like YOUR zombies. They never change, they don't have feelings, or ever look up into the sky and give an painfully emotional, "Wahghghh..." Please keep up the GOOD work.

Now Charlie Adlard is a great artist, I think issue 19 was his best so far, but... now this is just a harmless question... are you going to switch up the artist again anytime soon? Don't hit me. Just asking

That's up to Charlie. As far as I'm concerned, he can draw this book as long as he wants to

AND, LOVE the little zombie facts you give, like how those armless, jawless zombies somehow make it so that tough-girl isn't attacked... those are just the little quirky things in your zombie universe that make it YOUR universe, and no one else's. Raurum needs some praise PRAISE RATHBURN. He sure can... gray tone. No, really, he's great too.

Thanks for the only comic I buy
YOU GUYS KILL!
Stephen Jacobine

Rathburn is the man. He's also a great artist on his own as well. He just finished up Fantastic Four. Foes with me and is starting work on a new Image series that I'll be keeping under wraps for the time being. He keeps busy in-between toning sessions on this book

Letter Hacks

It's gonna be hard to write a letter without sounding like a complete kiss-ass, but here goes...

Well, I've just put down issue 19 of TWD and I gotta say... damn fine work once again guys. This issue just doesn't let up.

I'm liking the new character introduced in this issue. By the time this goes to print, no doubt she's been fleshed out (and from what I've seen from Tony's future covers in Previews, gets involved in a BIG way) and I'm looking forward to reading that, but for now, hell damn she kicked all angles of zombie ass in this issue. Nice! The fact that Rick popped Dexter in the noodle amidst the chaos was a nice touch too. Sure, it was to save the group as a whole, but it should be interesting seeing how Rick adapts to such harsh actions (Charlie's last panel spoke a thousand words if you ask me - such is the power of his art)

Heh, I bought that page... what a GREAT image that was.

Being a lifelong fan of comics, I've floated from title to title like a funnybook vampire waiting for the next gem to leech off. I think the last title I followed religiously was Augustyn and Barnes's Crimson, and that bad boy finished a loooooong time ago. Then, after many months of reading a few titles that started strong but ultimately began to fizzle, I read some of the buzz for the Walking Dead. It just sounded like the kind of book I would enjoy. So I joined the club with Issue 7 and a shiny new first TPB

Boy was I blown away.

And since then, I think the Walking Dead is the only comic I religiously look forward to in that nice bundle that I order online. In a sea of zombies (dies/stories/games/films... the book sells over all of them. Don't get me wrong... like many other folks, I love a nice slice of zombie action (why are so many people attracted to working with walking corpses? can't be the smell) when its done right - its just a shame that its done right on so few an occasion. I think is the character work that I love the most. Even if the character's despicable, their demise will have an impact. That sort of thing doesn't usually happen in comics. There's none of the "Bang, you're dead. Oh well, never mind" thought process that normally happen. So thumbs up to (the self-confessed shut in) you yourself Kirkman. This is an ongoing piece of class

Just because I spend most of my time at home... doesn't mean I'm a shut in. My house is just really cool. I've got everything I need right now. Oh, and it's frigging summer time, it's HOT outside... why would I want to go out in the heat?

Art wise - I don't think there's a better combination than the Moore/Adlard/Rathburn connection. Sure, I was one of those that, at a first glance at issue 7 said "oh... the art has changed", but Adlard is fast becoming a force of nature when it comes to this book, colour me happy on that one! Speaking of colour, I don't think enough things are said about Cliff Rathburn's gray tones, and for a guy who brandishes a mean pencil in his own right, he sure knows how to splash the tones for maximum impact (Oh, and if anyone's reading this, be sure to pick up Rathburn's 'Reaper' trade if you can. It's a quality piece of work)

Yes, the ART at least in Reaper is second to none

Speaking of quality pieces of work, you may be pleased to know that reading this led me down a path to purchase two of your Brrt trades and a few Invincible issues. Great stuff, and I recommend it all to my fellow comic book reading buddies regularly. But then again, I'm from the mindset that anyone who writes a book called Battle Pope can do no wrong anyway LOL.

Anyway, back to the shuffling dead. .

Another thing I like about this book is the unexpected element of it all. I've never known a book to surprise me at least once from issue to issue (and its refreshing to see someone actually back up the "no-one-s safe" talk with some surprising and horrific deaths - kudos to Mr. Kirkman). This certainly is one book that no one can predict - and I think that's part of why it just keeps on growing like it has (and rightfully so, the day I hear this book has been cancelled, I think I'll eat my own face - and does anybody want that on their conscience? Thought not).

Overall, consider me a lifelong Walking Dead reader (not literally of course, though after a heavy night out, I sometimes resemble one of your decaying ghouls the next morning).

I'm not going to be another of those dudes who asks if Rick's going to go back to find more survivors, or to give you my five cents on where I think the story should go. You know what you're doing, and for all intents and purposes, you guys can drive this wagon all the way over a cliff and back again if that's how you feel. This is one reader who is just happy to be along for the ride.

Until the dead start walking in my neighbourhood and I'm forced to fight them off with a shovel... Keep up the good work guys!

Vince Hunt
UK

p.s. I'm sure I got some shit on my lips from all that ass kissing, but f**k it, this is the first of no doubt a few letters I'll send to the funkatron collect'ive, so its best to get it out the way in one hit.

We enjoy a good ass kissing from time to time. So no harm done

And that'll do it for this month. Man, it seems like these things are getting LONGER

Thanks for reading folks. I'll see you all back here next month.

Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Issue 22, here she is, isn't she grand?

If any of you folks live in Tacoma, Washington and you know where Comic Book Ink is (or have a phone book and know how to get to mapquest.com) come on out to my signing on October 22nd. You can find out more information by visiting www.comicbookink.com I'm sure there's a phone number on there somewhere if you've got some questions. Come on out!

Other than that, not really much to report this month. So I guess I'll just dive right into the letters. Sound good?

Good

Dear Kirkman,

I wrote you a letter in another book about writers not relying too much on pictures to tell the story. Issue 20 had four pages with no words other than "HUMNGH," "GLH," "RUH," and "Wow." Yet, those pages were my favorite in the book. Oh, except Allen getting bit (finally!) Page #2 also established that even "dead" zombies can still be dangerous!

Did you guys realize that was Thomas' remains? I thought not.

Some questions and stuff

1. Ok, so in the Extended Cut of Dawn of the Dead we discover that Peter had a brother that was a pro football player. So...?

Really? Hmmmmmm.

2. In Zombie King #0, we learn that zombies have other urges. Will we see any cows in TWD?

No. Not any time soon.

3. How much did Land of the Dead kick ass?

A fair bit.

4. Did you forget to look for Simon Pegg too?

No, I knew where he was and I knew where to look. So I didn't miss it. Pretty cool stuff actually.

5. Really, no smart zombies?

Nah. Sorry.

Man, zombie books everywhere. Zombie King, Dead World, Shaun of the Dead, Zombie Tales, Dead Eyes Open, Living with Zombies, and others. Keep up the good work. I wish I had more to say about each issue, but they're just so solid. Oh, thanks for biting Allen. I've been wanting him gone since before Donna. After that, I was hoping Zombie Donna would get 'em. So thanks. Here's to someone eating Otis!

Later,
Chris Pitts

Man, you really didn't like Allen? Well, I'm sorry to say that I wouldn't count him out just yet.

Hiya, Kirkman,

So, Frank Cho totally owes you a debt of gratitude. Here you are, almost two years into your zombie epic, and there are still letters talking about the similarities between your opening and the opening sequence of 28 DAYS LATER.

Not that many now, thankfully.

Obviously, Cho wanted to dodge that bullet, sat down, and decided to figure out a way to open his own zombie tale with something that would not invite similar cries. And what do we get?

A zombie fucking a cow. Umm. Wow.

Hey, you can threaten us with aliens all you want, but I don't think you've ever thrown necrobustality at us. Get with it!

I'll get right on that.

Loved the Bendis photo at the back of issue 20. What you need to do now is stick his grinning mug over the "I" in the Image logo. You can just say you wanted to follow DC's lead since they just updated their classic bullet

Keep up the fantastic work!

-Ernie Cooper

Nobody wants to look at Bendis that much. Trust me

Listen Kirkman,

Enough with the prison already lets get these people moving. Don't get me wrong I love The Walking Dead but lets see some more zombie action! By the way, are you gonna put a #0 issue just like you did with Invincible?

Danny Ardeljan

No plans for a #0 issue just yet but you never know. Now, as far as the prison goes... just keep reading. There's plenty more zombie action coming up.

Hi,

I just wanted to let you know about a problem with my Walking Dead #20 issues I received from Diamond this week. I usually don't look inside the books when I check the items in but your book is one of the few that I look forward to reading. When I read the issue I noticed that eight pages were printed twice along with another eight duplicate pages from the letters column. All of my books were printed this way. I called this into Diamond and found out that they do not have any more issues in stock but back ordered it for me. I am not sure if this is widespread but I wanted to let you know in case there were a lot of damages called in this week maybe you can get the printer to print some more. Or even worse if it is widespread and the fans catch it, you are aware of it ahead of time.

Thanks for the great comic

Steve Tafuni

This is a common printing mishap that happens a LOT on very small portions of the print runs on many books. It's happened to a lot of books over the years. Luckily, it's usually just a small portion of the print run (less than 100 copies)

OK--I think everyone needs to chill about killing Rick! Come on, he is the only anywhere near remotely trained for the stuff that's going on! Besides, having zombie hordes, a cheating wife and cheating -police partner that just happened to die at the hands of his son would wear anyone down! BTW, I think Rick was justified in taking that prisoner out---I'd have shot him in the head too!!! Anyway, loved the current Team-Up arch, esp. punisher shooting off the finger---too funny!!! Love the book and keep up the good work!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

Sorry, I'm just NOT going to print this. It's just not RANDOM enough. Please try again next time.

Here it is Wednesday (okay it's Friday), and I have read all of today's comics. Now when I finished the issue #20's contents, I was not surprised to find a recurring theme in the letters column. All these readers are saving their favorite titles to read last in their weekly stacks of comics, like it's some way to delay the satisfaction of a good lay with an array of titles to serve as a bit of foreplay before the Walking Dead. I thought, "how pathetic," then I realized that I had saved my copy of the Walking Dead until last. (that's almost as pathetic as all those people whining about Hawkeye in Bendis's letter column.)

No, it's not even close. Although, I gotta admit, I read my favorite comics FIRST and then I usually end up with a bunch of books I eventually end up forgetting to read.

Anyway, I just wanted to let you know that upon reading the first three trades of the Walking Dead, borrowing them from a friend, I have resolved myself to catch up with this zombie epic, even though I don't consider myself a zombie fanatic. Actually, I am not surprised but am thrilled to hear of the impending Walking Dead hardback (hope there's a Charlie sketch included in each, maybe some of your scripts). But since I am not a zombie enthusiast, I wondered why I like this series so much. I collect 20 titles or so a month and one thing is recurrent...it is just the same as taking a step back and looking at the variety of titles that I collect. Powers,

Daredevil, Runaways, Walking Dead, Young Avengers, Astonishing X-Men... a variety of things going on in each title. I just think that the world of superheroes needed a back, white, and gray Zombie-Human-Survivalist-Horror-Epic to stir things up a bit. Just like Image did way back when they started and continue to do today. The variety and events that have impacts on future events is what keeps things going...I mean when one letter column starts referencing another in the comic book industry, we've hit something. Call it a high, call it a low. Who knows? But the variety is what keeps my creative vision going and my ambition as a comic fan alive. If you killed Rick (which I don't see happening) things would go on. Tyreese is just as worthy to be the center of the book, as is any number of the other characters. That is the beauty of this book. Take them where you will...we will follow like the mindless hoard you command in the book.

Daniel Guy

P.S. Any chance that Bendis can convince you to take over Daredevil when he leaves? Maybe that suggestion I gave him that he should blackmail you into doing it will work. Think about it.

Bendis was going to hand me the baton, but I was off in the bathroom. It went to Brubaker by default. because he was on the panel with Brian. Sucks to be me.

Bobby Kirkman and family?

I just wanted to say your book is awesome! I came across something on the internet that I believe would make your book better (if possible). Go to www.eathufu.com for a tasty treat. It is human flavored tofu. Maybe you could have a zombie representative try to talk to Rick and tell them why they taste so good before or after the aliens and. You could even have the zombie describe the taste after you try this hufu. It would be pretty accurate

Eric Baca

I loved you in the Hulk Movie. It's a shame you went nuts

Holy crap dude,

Issue 20's letters page made me feel like I was experiencing DejaVu over and over again. So many of the same questions at once, that's just weird. Not only that but many fans stating the same things (even more than usual) like when they started reading, how they started reading. Just goes to show great minds think alike. (I guess, P) I won't waste time by telling how great the book is (I've done that in two letters already :)) I think Darrick Patrick is in one of my Yahoo! groups, He's the guy who used all caps on his words. Anyway I was thinking (still) about the latest issue two days after reading it and was putting a list of actors together who might play the roles of the characters in a Movie or HBO mini-series. You should definitely go the Mini-series route if offered a script. Anyway on to some picks. I can't think who would be in all the roles as I'm not certain of ethnic backgrounds on persons like Glenn, I believe Lori is Native American. And some were just offed too quick. On to the List

RICK: Viggo Mortenson (He's got the rugged look down from Hidalgo and LOTR)

SHANE: Ben Affleck (And not cause I'd like to see him get shot twice for ruining Daredevil. well maybe...)

MORGAN: Morgan Freeman (I know he's a little old but the man can act, and make-up could take care of the rest)

DUANE: ?

LORI: Iyari Limon (The girl who played KENNEDY in the last season of Buffy the Vampire Slayer.) you can see her here <http://www.ressbtvs.com/trivia/episodes/season-7/710/>

CARL: ?

DIM: Liam Neeson

ALLEN: Oliver Platt.

Donna: Eric's mom from that 70's show

BEN & BILLY: ? kids are too hard to cast. P

GLENN: ? still not sure of his ethnic background Asian?

DALE: Michael Caine

Carol: Rebecca Romijn Stamos.

SOPHIA: ? Damn kids

ANDREA & AMY: Lindsey Lohan. (They are both close enough in look and age that she could do both parts)

TYREESE: Ving Rhames.

JULIE: ?

CHRIS: Tobey Maguire.

OTIS: ?

HERSHEL: Michael Douglas.

MAGGIE: Alexa Vega

BILLY: ?

LACEY: ?

ARNOLD: ?

RACHEL: ?

SUSIE: ?

PATRICIA: ?

AXEL: Hulk Hogan

JOE: ?

THOMAS: Anthony Hopkins.

ANDREW: Lil' Bow

DEXTER: Laurence Fishburn.

MICHONNE: Naomi Harris (from 28 days later)

Realistically, I doubt most of these actors would be available for a TV show. And I KNOW a normal TV budget couldn't afford them. I go with most if not all unknowns. It's more fun that way

Best I can come up with, If they don't work just use Simon Pegg and a lot of Make-up for all the roles LOL, what's you're crack at them, or better yet who would other fans feel best fit the roles? On to some (Not so serious) questions.

1. Can we have Aliens before issue 75?

That would ruin the surprise

2. Will your Zombies be buggering any Cows soon? (Do you know where I get this Question from?)

Fuck Frank Cho.

3. How about a Shaun, Liz, ED, WD Crossover?

Liz?

4. Will there be a copy of the "ZOMBIE SURVIVAL GUIDE" in the prison Library?

We can only hope.

5. And a Question you have NEVER been asked, WILL the Zombies stay stupid?

Yeah.

LOL...Hey, I was Just Kidding put murdering artist back on their chains ACK!

Matt McIntyre (Scots Rule)

Oh, you were joking. Sorry.

I liked the thought that the survivors are actually doing jobs, like in normal life !!! Picked up the Invincible #0 and the trade #1 and damn you they were great!!!! BTW, you read Zombie King yet? A cow!!!! That was ssssssssssoooooooooooooo wrong!!!! Thanks for the great books!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

I think this went to the wrong email. Or better yet, did you send this email to all three books mentioned here?

Dear Robert Kirkman,

When I decided to write this letter, I knew I didn't want it to be one of those long, droning, boring letters full of endless ass-kissing and me telling you what I think you should do with your own story... So I think I've boiled it down to what I really want to tell you.

Thank you

I really enjoy reading your book. It is my favorite title to read by far. I've been passing the trades around to anyone who will take the time to look at them... and everyone is immediately sucked into your world. They immediately get the hunger for more... So before I blabber on and on... Thank you. On behalf of my roommates and myself... Thank you

Mike Craft
Shawnee, OK

Great, short and to the point. Thanks. Nice job. Oh, wait.

Addendum: I wanted to take this opportunity to share some of our art with you... Since you've been so kind and gracious to share yours with us. My friend Byron and I make music under the name 'Apologist' ...I suggested that we call ourselves The Walking Dead... But he wasn't as hot on that idea as I was... You could check out our website for some of our music... (<http://www.freewebs.com/apologist>) More than one song is about zombies actually... So maybe if you don't appreciate the music there's a good story to be had on at least two of the songs. Keeping kicking ass on the comic book by the way... I have absolutely no complaints with what you're doing

Man, you were doing so well before the addendum. No WAY am I going to listen to your music NOW

Hey guys,
First off, want to do the usual: congrats for making a great fuckin' book. I must admit I was very sad to see Tony go as the main artist, as his artwork was one of the main reasons I got into this, but Charlie and Cliff are still keeping me happy. Just finished issue 20 and it's still going strong. But on to business, a friend and I found a small continuity error in issue 19 (I guess slight spoilers ahead if you haven't read 19) In it we are introduced to Michonne, the samurai sword carrying badass, and her two lovely dates (both zombies) As a condition to being let into the prison, she has to kill both of her zombie friends, which she does in a single chop. Now on the cover and frames previous they are shown without lower jaws and arms. After they are decapitated and on the ground, THEY HAVE ARMS AGAIN! This is shown in two frames. Not a very big deal, but it makes me feel smart to point out the only mistake in like 20 issues, so back off. But anyways, love the comic, keep up the good work, and welcome to the fun. Rus.

Nick Driever

Zombies grow arms when you cut their heads off. How do you think we get four-armed zombies? Stupid

Hey Man,

Let me start off by saying that "The Walking Dead" is an amazing comic, definitely the highlight

of the current comics offerings
I'd like to ask you a couple of questions, if you don't mind. Firstly, I know you've said that you don't want to water down the universe by doing spin-offs and the like, but what I'd really like to see is a Walking Dead sketchbook featuring sketches by both Moore and Adlard. Surely it wouldn't take that much work as I'm sure there is already a wealth of stuff that's never been published. It would be a nice little extra to the main title and think of the extra money! ;) Also, I don't know why you get letters about Adlard's art, saying they preferred it before he joined, but to be honest I think he's a better artist than Moore. I think the book as a whole has improved since the start of the second arc. The art has got better and so has the writing. Kudos to you. Have you seen "Beyond Reanimator?" What did you think? Heh, and you certainly need more of the shower scenes! ;)

Never seen beyond reanimator.

My big request however - I am a third year BA (hons) Media Production student at Cumbria Institute of the Arts in Carlisle, England, and for one of my two major projects in my final year I have to submit a 5000 word report on a relevant topic of my choice. I have chosen to write about Comic book movies and why they are often a failure in the eyes of comic book fans and the creators of such titles. What I would like to do, if you would be so kind as to give me a few minutes of your time, is for you to write the report for me! HAHA Only joking! Seriously, if it is possible could I possibly conduct a quick interview with you via email asking you on your opinions of a few different comic films. I understand you are a very busy man what with your comics writing and the script for the Invincible film that I hear you're writing, but if this would be possible I would be very appreciative and grateful

Thank you for your time,
Mike Swain

Sure, send me the questions. You guys see what I have to put up with? Everyone wants a piece!

I saw the movie the Undead. That movie SUCKED!! I've seen better acting in porno movies. What was the deal with "Hillbilly Jim" acting like this was the Matrix. Doing flips and firing guns in slow motion. And the aliens, I don't even know what to say about that. It was so terrible

Long live the Walking Dead!!!!

Man, I thought Undead was a GREAT movie. I mean, if you're looking for a serious movie--it's not for you, but if you're looking for something FUN and CRAZY you can't go wrong. I think Undead is SOLID GOLD, actually. I loved it.

Hey Walking Dead crew,
Man do I love this comic. After every new issue, I'm yearning for the next. There are so many directions and possibilities you can use. Its only on issue 21 and it feels like its just at the beginning. Please at least take it to 300 issues. On to some questions:

Any chance of an issue 0 like you did with Invincible. I'd really like to see the beginning of the infestation, maybe something about Atlanta. You should really get Tony Moore to come back for it. What's he been up to? That Fear Agent looks kind of cool

Well, you kinda already answered your question, part of it at least. Tony's been off working on Fear Agent. There are no plans at this point to do a zero issue but you never know when plans can change

I know people keep asking about a live action Walking Dead movie or tv show. It definitely should be an HBO original series. I'm going to try to write to someone at HBO and get some other fans to do the same. (So get to it people) I would live to see it in black and white. Nothing is scarier than black blood pouring out of the body. If the chance comes up to do so, do not let them change a thing. I'd rather not see it if you don't have creative control. Its perfect the way it is. No new characters, no getting rid of characters, no plot changes. TWD has more drama and emotion than anything on TV

If The Walking Dead gets transferred to any other medium, TV or film... there are going to be changes. There would have to be. Don't forget, the possibility is there for changes to make it BETTER

Any chance you and the Funkotron crew will come to Wizard World Boston?

Thanks for a great comic
Bily McEnery

No plans to be at Boston. Sorry.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

I'm about to write something you have probably never read before, especially concerning "The Walking Dead." (Yes, I've wrote to comics before, I wrote to Marvel's "Transformers" twice and "X Men" twice, all four letters never got published, though)

I HATE horror movies. Hate them. I have a very weak stomach, so all that blood and gore just sickens me. I try to tell myself that is not real but it doesn't make any difference. I still get nauseated when I watch them. If I am interested in a movie, I have to wait for it to come to Sci-Fi Network so that I can watch the edited movie, and even then there are still some scenes that sicken me. My problem with zombie movies has been what you summed up in your prologue, that I'm always asking "What happened to..." after the movie. To me, it wasn't worth all the gore to just be left wondering why at the end of the movie

Sissy.

Then I heard about your comic. The first ever mention of it was in the first letter page of "Marvel Team-Up" when everyone was saying how wonderful issue one was (which it was, by the way) and how "The Walking Dead" was their

favorite comic. That was high praise coming from such accomplished writers. Then I saw some places online that kept talking about how this was a great book and should be everyone's "Must Read" list. Even with all this praise, I was still skeptical. I mean, I HATE horror movies, how could I enjoy a "Horror Comic?" So I finally decided what the hell and picked up the first trade

I couldn't put it down. I reread it three times. I was just fascinated by how the book focused on character development, not zombie mayhem. I immediately went out and picked up the second trade and pre-ordered the third. Luckily, one of my local comic shops happened to have issues 13-16 (the current issue at the time), so I picked them up and have since added "The Walking Dead" to my pull list. This comic is the best comic on the market

right now, and I'm glad I'm finally on board to read it each and every month.

Okay, I take back the "sissy" remark.

I just finished issue 20 and I'm amazed how the story just keeps me guessing every month. Just when I think that I know what is coming, you throw me a curve instead of that fastball and just leave me dumbfounded at the plate. Enough with the cliffhangers, okay? Don't you think you have tortured us poor readers (not to mention your poor characters) enough? As 20 draws to a close we have Allen being bitten and Tyreese and Dale finding a generator. Will Allen survive? Will the generator work? Tune in next month, same Bat Time, same Bat Channel.

I have a few questions/suggestions

1. I've been thinking about Chris Pitts statement that Tyreese was bitten and have come to the conclusion that he wasn't. I would think that since he's been back, Carol and he have had sex. As panicky as she seems, I would think that if anything about him was different she would have drawn attention to it. Besides, when he returned in issue 17 he had his shirt off and there were no bite marks

2. I think Allen will survive. His bite seems bad, but not life threatening. Amy had her neck bitten, Donna had her face bitten off, and Hershel's kids all had their necks bitten. Jim's bite was not life threatening, however, it was a huge chunk of skin taken off. I think that Jim's wound could have been treated and he died (if he died) of bacterial infection due to exposure. I think that Allen will want to die, but he won't. The group will find some antibiotics at the prison, treat his wound with them, and he will survive, which will make him more depressed (He has had a death wish since Donna's death)

3. I have come to the conclusion that you are a Minnesota Vikings fan. You see, in the early 90's they made a trade with the Dallas Cowboys where they got Hershel Walker and the Cowboys got the draft pick that they used to draft Emmitt Smith. Either that, or a guy named Hershel used to beat the shit out of you at school. Why else would you create a character named Hershel just to torture him so? I mean, the man's family (except for two kids) have been wiped out in the most horrific ways. I'm pretty sure his last son will be killed soon and Maggie is going to get pregnant by Glenn, just to torture him more and make you feel better.

I only know one guy named Hershel, and he's a nice guy. Hershel in the book is just an unlucky dude... to say the LEAST.

4. You have hinted that contact with either the military or government is coming soon. I'm hoping when this happens, they will have an explanation for what caused this plague. I know that you have stated that you think by revealing what caused people to turn into zombies, it will somehow cheapen the book. I disagree. I think it would satisfy a lot of fans curiosity. I propose that you put it to a vote. Ask your readers to vote on whether or not they want the cause revealed. I assume that there are many who feel the way I do and would vote for it. Just consider it. It's not like if you don't reveal the cause I'm going to stop reading the book. I'll only stop reading when Lori's baby turns out to be some Shane/Zombie/Alien mixture.

I'm not going to be putting it to a vote any time soon. I have no plans to ever reveal the origin of the zombies

Again, I can't say enough how much I love this book. I look forward to the twists and turns every month. Keep up the good writing and you will have a faithful reader until the end of this book (which I hope isn't anytime soon).

Sincerely,
James E. Ragan

No plans to end the book for a good long time. I promise.

Mr. Kirkman,

Just read the latest issue of WD 20. Loved it. It's the kind of book that just makes you keep coming back for more. This book reminds me of film director Quentin Tarantino and Garth Ennis' comic series PREACHER. Why do you ask? Well, let me tell you:

1) Terrific dialogue. All three of you have a pretty good ear for dialogues. Although, I have to admit that you haven't reached Mr. Ennis' flair and use of creative cussing yet, but you're getting there.

I'll try to work in more creative cussing as the book goes on.

2) Shock value. Both Mr. Tarantino and Ennis know how to shock people and milk it for all it's worth. People read PREACHER just to see how far Mr. Ennis and Dillon would go. You, Mr. Kirkman, have "Cliffhanger" endings. You build up the characters in the story, make us care about them, and leave their fate in dire situations to be continued in the next issue. Which, I'm sure, leaves us readers cursing in frustration and suffering from sexual impotence until 30 days later the new issue of WD comes in. (Yeah - WD is a great way to get laid! Women just love flesh-eating zombies-just kidding.)

Did you just say... "sexual impotence?" I mean REALLY? If the book is causing THAT problem I WANT you to quit, sales be DAMNED!

I do have to say that you lucked out with Mr. Adlard. I remember his work from The X-FILES. Damn, those were the good ol' days, eh Mr. Adlard? I do hope he's here to stay until WD-75

Personally, I hope he stays on AFTER issue 75.

I do wonder if you're planning to address the issue of what caused the virus that turns people into zombies? My theory is, it's an airborne virus that turns dead tissues into living dead tissues. As being bitten by zombies is not the only way to turn into a zombie as you have indicated several issues ago. Which makes the title WD rather appropriate. You can't cure the disease unless you know the cause, only treat them as they may say in Control for Disease Centre

Do you plan on a second volume of WD after number 75? I know that you have indicated before in your letter columns that you'd like WD to be around

forever
Being realistic, we both
know the odds are against WD from being around
forever. Can you imagine the odds of Dave Sim doing 300 issues of CEREBUS and actually achieving it? What if he had a heart attack, or been in a crippling car accident, or a debilitating illness? To beat those odds and reach the goal that took Mr. Sim over 27 years to reach is amazing, but not everyone can do it.

Mr. Larsen might be able to do 300 issues of SAVAGE DRAGON, if he'd just get back to doing the book monthly since he's 29 issues short of the half-way mark. You, Mr. Kirkman, have an even longer way to go, besides nothing lasts forever. The readers are a fickle audience, we can get bored of a series and move on to a new one, or get eaten by zombies before the next issue of WD.

Well, I'd just be happy to make it to 100. That said, I think I'm younger than both Larsen and Sim were when they started their books. Well, Larsen at least, Sim was probably pretty young. Anyway, I'm going to go as long as I can with this. And I think Adlard is on board for the duration, at least for the foreseeable future. So we'll see how long the thing goes. With sales what they are now, I can say for pretty much certain that we'll make it to issue 50 unless things take a DRASTIC turn. To this day, though, sales still go UP with every issue.

Good luck anyway, on reaching WD-75. I hope to be around that long to see you and Mr. Adlard reach that goal. It might be interesting to see another vantage point-of-view of WD. Say either from a zombie POV or what's life like in Europe, Africa, and so on. So far we've only know what's like in America (but not Canada!)

See ya around, and keep up with the good work.

Yours sincerely,
Tom Fitzpatrick

P.S. Just love the letter column. There's so few around anymore. So that's is what BENDIS looks like with hair. Jeez, does he ever look ugly?!? No wonder he's bald. Nice way of getting revenge. ;-)

Well, I hear Brian has something planned that's going to be pretty bad. I may have opened Pandora's box here. I'm pretty sure I'm going to live to regret printing that picture.

Dear Funk Gang,

Your comic sucks and I hate you. (Just kidding)

I wanted to share some quick praises, observations, and zombie thoughts.

Issue #19 had a really great and creative cover. I was glad to see a sword and the nice "zombie control" devices that were utilized. I often thought to myself long ago "If I were ever in a zombie ruled world, I would definitely have a sword on me. In case I run out of ammo, this would do the trick" I would probably carry a European Fauchion sword instead of a Samurai sword though. Issue #20 was really nice, especially the opening scenes showing the going's on of zombies. There was some nice comic, if not provocative observations by studying their movements and reactions. Plus it was great to get away from the human characters for a moment.

Speaking of zombie observations, I wanted respond to your comments regarding my last letter. I was the one who brought rigormortis and how it would constrict the muscles, causing problems for zombie movement. You responded by saying, and I quote "you can't pick or choose what's realistic and what's not. and "it's all throw out the window...". Oh really? Hmm... let's see what you have chosen for what zombies can and cannot do...

1. Anyone who dies turns into a zombie
2. Anyone who is bitten by a zombie dies, then turns into a zombie (a la Romero)
3. Zombies attack the living and want to bite and/or devour them (a la everybody)
4. Zombies apparently attack animals, like deer and horses (a la twisted Kirkman)
5. Zombies are slow moving and slow witted (Romero and Kirkman)
6. Zombies can recognize humans by smell
7. Zombies can recognize humans talking or making noises (according to issue 19)
8. Zombies can see and hear and smell

I may have missed a few, but here is my point. We all pick and choose in fantasy. What we want a zombie to do in a movie, comic book, or whatever is up to us. However, if zombies could really become reality and the dead could come back to life, nature will pick and choose. Maybe the dead can come alive, but would be unable to walk, or make noises. Maybe they would decay and crumble apart while attempting to walk. So once again I say, "zombies can't happen", but I guess in the fantasy world we could even make them sprout wings and fly.

One last point here. It is interesting that if a person is brain dead, their body can go on living for at least a short period of time. If their heart stops, then the body dies almost immediately (then rigormortis sets in and then decay). Okay its question time:

In one of the early issues, Rick and Glenn proved to us in

Atlanta that you can trick a zombie's sense of smell and make them think you are a zombie. Rick and Glenn were taking up a storm though, and the zombies apparently did not notice. In issue #19, we see the new girl reacting with a vocal grunt to a situation and a zombie nearby reacts to it. So can your zombies recognize human voices or not?

Rick and Glenn were covered in goo. Whether it was sense of smell or not that masked their presence really well in Atlanta. It could have been the fact that they were covered in goo that could have looked like wounds therefore making the zombies THINK they were zombies. Michonne moved around freely with her two zombie companions. Again, this may be because they masked her smell and may not be. But when the zombie reacted to her, it's not clear if it was going to attack or not, Michonne killed it before it had the chance. Clearly there's a wide range of things that would get the attention of a zombie. I should also note that it doesn't have to be the same with all zombies. Not all people react the same way to things and not all zombies would either.

Okay, Robert. Now for some really pointless questions

1. Are you a night owl?

an early bird?

Early bird I suppose. I get up at a decent hour far more often than I stay up late... but I do stay up late and work on occasion.

2. Have you seen the 1980's Italian zombie flick called "Gates of Hell"? If not, you should check it out. Very strange premise: Vampire-like creatures can turn you into zombies if you look at them. The way humans turn into zombies in this picture is absolutely horrific. I won't ruin it here if you want to see for yourself what happens to them. I actually saw this in the theater.

Never seen it- but I will NOW

Okay this is my last thoughts, but mainly to the artists. I want to see variety with the zombies. No more bald, jean wearing zombies for awhile. Here are some suggestions.

1. Costumed zombies (give us a Romero clown or something)
2. Cowboy zombies (we're in Georgia correct? Sure y some ranchers with cowboy hats are roaming around)
3. Zombie kids
4. Women zombies
5. Fat zombies

'Til the next (rigormortis- free) zombie attack,
Tracy Kent

While I will admit, there have been a fair share of bald shirtless zombies, there have been others. Plenty of others. Look at the opening scene of issue 20. You'll see women and children zombies. That said, we'll see if Charlie can't do some more unique zombies. Although, football player and clown zombies in the Romero flicks always bugged me.

Greetings Mr. Kirkman,

I read in a newspaper recently that TWD had been picked up by HBO to develop as a series? Any truth to that? If so, congrats are truly in order, and if handled as well as the other HBO shows, it is sure to be a hit. If not, well, I was hopeful and duped, but what a great idea.

I'd like to know what newspaper reported THAT. I mean, I'd really like for the comic to be picked up by HBO but I'm telling you, as the guy who would know- it HASN'T been.

As a long-time zombie-film aficionado, I must say your book almost outdoes them all; much better than most zombie films, even some considered "classics"; don't get me wrong, I love even the worst zombie exploitation flick out there passionately, but I would say your book is way up there with the original Dawn of the Dead, and perhaps even better than Fulci's Zombie. It definitely beats uncle George's latest opus, which was unfortunately rather disappointing. Time to move on.

Been with you since issue #1, and I certainly don't plan on stopping. Keep up the mesmerizing work, it's really now up to you to show the world how it's done.

Sincere regards,

M. Roy

P.S. any TWD merch on the way? Just curious.

We have plans to do SOME merchandise- exactly WHAT is still to be decided. Of course, you'll hear it here first.

Dear Letter Hacks:

Sorry, long time, no write. No excuse, either.

Even if it isn't explained HOW zombies came to be in Walking Dead, there seem to still exist rules. I've given it a lot of thought and tried to see where it may differ from other zombie stuff, including the Romero zombie rules it APPEARS to be predicated upon. Let me know if I'm just flat-out wrong about any of it:

- 1) If you die, you become a zombie
- 2) If you are bitten, you die faster. It makes you sick
- 3) If you act fast enough, you might be able to prevent getting sick from a zombie bite. You need to keep it from spreading through your blood stream so the only answer is amputation and fast

This one is yet to be confirmed

- 4) The only way to stop a zombie is by destroying its brain.
- 5) Zombies decay at different rates due to outside factors such as weather, state of the body at time of death and possibly, whether or not they eat.

The eating thing is speculation. It has yet to be revealed if they get any benefit from eating.

- 6) Zombies can smell death and decay and ignore it.

Suspected, but not yet proven.

- 7) Zombies are attracted to motion.
- 8) Zombies bite and eat a bit but in general have no interest in digesting or eating all of their meal

I think it's been shown that they usually eat until something is gone or they've been interrupted

- 9) Different zombies have different patterns. Some stay still and wait for something to come by. Some roam out on their own. Most congregate together.
- 10) They move slowly

The rest of these seem fine.

We can also guess at some things that the zombies in Walking Dead may do

- 1) They will eat animals as well as people, but the animals do not seem to become zombies.
2) They may vaguely recall what they did during life and emulate it. Congregating in cities, maybe more.
3) Their blood, at least in small quantities, does not seem to be a contagion, as our heroes have fought them hand-to-hand many times and would likely have gotten zombie blood in their eyes or in their mouth or in their cuts.

You can take a shower without water getting in your eyes and mouth. I don't think any of the characters have ingested zombie blood yet. I would imagine that would make them pretty sick.

Questions about the Walking Dead zombies

- 1) Do they need to eat to keep going?
2) Can they communicate at all?
3) Do they want just flesh or brains?

While I far prefer the attention paid to our regular characters, I'd love to see the zombies' nature examined in further depth down the road. One thing almost all zombie films approach at some point is the characters trying to learn if there is a cure. There might not be, but with all the time they have to kill, you have to figure they'd think about it A LOT.

Keep up the great work This is a great title,
Chris Piers

I still maintain that realistically finding a "cure" would be at the bottom of these character's "to do" lists. Staying safe and staying alive is more important than trying to figure out a way to stop the spread of zombie whatever. Also, they don't have equipment or know how to do this. They may eventually run into someone who does, though.

Mr Kirkman,

Well, it's been many a year since last I wrote a letter to a comic series. I grew up on comics and the late eighties/early nineties was truly a fun time to be a young letterhacker and it was my pleasure to contribute to letter pages with the likes of Uncle Elvis, Charlie Novinskire, Mark Lucas and Malcolm Bourn. But like everything else, it seemed that the various titles became uninterested in actual opinion pieces and instead wanted mindless praise for half-assed work. This trend proved to be the end of my letterhacking days.

Then I came across THE WALKING DEAD thanks to Wood, a friend a fellow zombie fan. Aside from the obvious of it being a damn good zombie story, the thing that drew me in even more was your letters page. Unfortunately, it seems a strong letters section for comics as a whole has become a thing of that past, which makes the few titles such as yours stand out all the more.

Having made it to the San Diego Comic Con this year I was disappointed to not have met you personally, but at least this has given me reason to write, and for that I should thank you as well.

Sincerely,
Marson Fedrick

I'm sorry if you missed me at Comic-Con this year. I was being pulled in all kinds of different directions and didn't get to spend nearly as much time at my own booth as I would have liked. I should be there again next year. Hopefully I'll be there to meet you. Now, if you just didn't find the time to get over to my booth... fuck you, buddy. Fuck you.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Never before in my life did I ever think that I would love reading comic books. I always thought that comics were nerdy and all about super heroes. But when my friend introduced me to your comic The Walking Dead, I completely fell in love with it. It is really hard for me to put the damn thing down. Anything can happen to anyone of the characters, no one is safe. That is what I love about it. I can't tell you how many times I was socked when I turned the page. I love it!! You should really think about putting out some kind of merchandise, like... maybe mini posters, t-shirts, playing cards. Anything would be wonderful!!

Also is there any chance that you will have some kind of signing here in Lexington, I would love to have you sign one of my Walking Dead comics.

Thanks,
L. Williams

I've done two signings in Lexington so far, both at A+ Collectables on Southland Drive. (this is Lexington, KY we're talking about, folks). I'm sure I'll be doing another sometime soon. Possibly at one of the other stores in Lexington.

I've never written to a comic book before, but Paul Shinn's letter in #20 (excellent issue, by the way--poor old Allan!) inspired me. The Littlest Hobo is a television show in which a dog travels around the country, stopping in one place every episode, usually to befriend some disabled kid and help him solve some local crime involving dastardly property developers or the like.

Unlike Lassie or Skippy the Bush Kangaroo however, Hobo was characterized by a tendency towards being utterly bloody depressing because the dog would bugger off during the climax of the episode, usually while no one was looking, and the little disabled kid would be all "where's my new friend? where did he go?" before finally realizing that he was once again a one in the world. Cue credits.

It was a Canadian show, but it also got shown a lot in Britain during the 1980's (as I recall, it was the only kids' show on Sunday mornings at the time) and so there's a whole bunch of twentysomething Brits who've been emotionally scarred by that malicious hound.

Kelvin Green

Man, I'm going to have to kick God in the nuts one day for saddling my with Lassie and Benji and keeping me from the littlest hobo by having me be born here. Granted, he's done plenty of other good for me... but I can't let that Hobo thing go. It sounds friggin' hilarious. And who knew Canada had their own shows?! Wow.

Hey Mr. Kirkman and crew. I'm a fan, and TWD kicks my sorry little ass. The thought of zombies taking over the Earth pops into my head every day, and when I look about my dirt-ridden town and all

the people who shamble about so much like the undead that they might as well be them, I sigh and read some back issues. Anyways, fantasies aside, I'm writing because I've got some beef with your readers..

Seems everyone's hating on Rick lately. Not everyone, but quite a few uneducated seem to just want you to kill him and do it quickly. That's so freaking stupid. I mean, kill him if you want, that's fine, but their reasons are ridiculous. Saying shit like he's become too bossy or that he's snapped and gone crazy and what have you, it seems these guys aren't actually reading your comic. They don't understand that even when humanity has failed, people are still human. To explain, let's take a look at why Rick is collapsing...

He wakes up, has no idea what's going on, and zombies are trying to eat him. Everyone else not in a coma knew about the zombies and slowly came to grips with it, where Rick's just thrown into it. Also, he has no clue where his family is and his only concern being finding them, brother never gets a chance to deal with all that. That's huge. Anyone of your snot-nosed pimply readers would break in two and throw themselves to the mercy of the zombies put into that situation. Rick's harder than Hell for dealing with that the way he did. Then, when he does find his family...

Everything seems fine, until Rick discovers his best friend has been hoping that Rick was gone forever so he could score with his wife, which he already did. Then his son kills Shane, and Lori's pregnant. On top of that, Rick gets nominated and elected to be leader of the little group, a position I doubt he really wants but knows not to turn it down because everyone is relying on him and he knows that he would be the best man for the job and that if he didn't take it he would be failing all those that have come to trust him. That's fucking heavy as well. And he still hasn't come to grips with the world properly yet.

Then every attempt at a better life gets someone or someones killed. Rick takes responsibility. This is fucking ridiculous. I feel so bad for this guy, he's been just eating everyone's shit this entire time. So, when Rick finds a fucked up murderer attempting to off most everyone in the group, he goes ballistic. He gets all that aggression out on this psycho and your readers berate him for it. He knows he's losing his mind, so he ups his aggression and assertiveness in an attempt to control it and this is the outcome. Anyone would react the same, if not worse. And when some misguided asshole threatens to force everyone out of safety, Rick thinks of everyone else and shoots the man. Cold, but necessary. He's not irrational or a danger to the group, he's just doing the God damned best he can for everyone, and fuck those readers who want him dead for it. The laws of man definitely become suspended when the system of man fails. But, if you've been panning on killing him, do it for the right reasons, not because some 14-year-old thinks Rick's not playing fair.

Anyways, thanks for listening to my rant. I just hope you print this and set some of the misguided straight. But aside from all that, you fuckers kick ass. Beautifully done comic here, and my favorite on the market by far. Can I come work for you?

Never stop

Love,
Jeff Allen

Aside from slightly insulting some of the fine readers of this comic, I've got to say you've hit the nail on the head. That's a pretty fair explanation of why Rick has been acting like he's acting. Bravo and thanks for writing.

Kirkman you Bastard!

After picking up volume 1 of the trade back in October of 2004, then followed by volumes 2 and 3, I am now on board with the monthly issues with Issue #19. Congrats, I'm addicted. And now I need my monthly fix, I can't hold out until volume 4 of the trade gets published. Bastard.

I don't really pick up many comics. At present I purchase Amazing Spider man, Fantastic Four, Daredevil, and the Walking Dead. By far, your book is my favorite, and the best of the four. Followed by Daredevil. The Walking Dead is so well done, that it's a pure joy to sit down and read it. Since my

first monthly issue was #19, I have no clue about those crazy letter pages. How come some publishers can't even include a letter page in their titles, and this title runs so many pages. Between the story, and the letter pages, this title is well worth the monthly price.

I just finished issue #20. Power Generator! What good is that? They'll need oil, or some sort of fossil fuel to get any electricity out of it. If there is some oil still in it, it will eventually run out. Then what? Back to the same problem. Ha! Here is a suggestion on how they can solve their long-term energy problem since we are under the assumption that nobody is delivering gas to them. They need to get some sort of portable power. Get a Yellow Pages. Locate the nearest Hardware store that has portable batteries with built in inverters and AC outlets on them. Probably at the same stop, they'll have Solar Panels that connect to those portable batteries in order to charge and recharge them. Once the place is located, get Rick and a few others to raid it and get the material to the prison. It won't solve all their problems, but it can solve a few things.

Anyway, keep up the good Bastard. I'll be there supporting this title, as long as you keep surprising the reader.

AA

Thanks for the letter, AA. We'll see where things go with this power generator. Our crew seems to have a lot to deal with before they even get back to figuring out how to turn that thing on.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

My way to becoming a reader of The Walking Dead was pretty long and curvy. I guess it all started with Jubilee (as many things in my life did). About a year ago, when I learned that a Jubilee comic was about to be published in September, my first natural reaction was to scream from joy. The second reaction was to write to a comic-based web-group I used to hang around and ask "Is this Kirkman guy good?" The answers I got were pretty favorable, so I started to think that me and the little mutant firecracker finally got lucky.

Which proved to be true, by the way - after the series was finished, I considered it to have been lacking only two things - a better artist and a longer story. Some time had passed,

before I heard about a comic title that sounded kind of strange. So once again I went and asked, "What's The Walking Dead about and who's the writer?"

"It's a great story about people facing an unusual situation, namely zombies", I heard. "And the writer's Robert Kirkman"

That's how I finally became the proud possessor of The Walking Dead #17 And my respect to the man that can write with such a great style both about zombies and killers and about a sharp-tongued mutant sparkcaster grew even greater.

To put it shortly - You're the man

Regards,
Danil Iver a. k. a. Salamander

Cool to hear from you. I'm always happy to hear how people came to read this book. It's pretty odd that you came in from JUBILEE but that's fine. You got here and that's what's important. I got a lot of crap for taking that book on. I mean, I'm not a teenage girl and that book wasn't exactly aimed at my usual demographic. I've got to say, though, I had a blast writing that book. Mostly because of Cory Sedlmeier the editor, who after a while pretty much let me run wild with the thing. I recommend the book to anyone who's liked any of my stuff I think it ended up being a cool little series.

Dear Mr. Kirkman and Letter Hacks,

First of all, I hate zombie movies.

I just wanted to get that out of the way. I don't watch zombie movies or horror movies in general, they're just not my thing, y' know? And because of that I successfully resisted The Walking Dead for a really long time.

But, I consider myself a smart comics fan, and as the praise for TWD kept growing and getting louder, it became harder to ignore. I listened to a comic shop owner talk for an hour about TWD and Invincible, and I read the fourthrail.com every week, and Randy Lander just kept writing about how great the book is too. And couple all the great praise I've heard with the fact that I'm a 28 year old schoolteacher that has the summer off, and well I had the time to try something new. So, I broke down and bought the first trade.

Fast-forward a month. I now have all 3 trades and issues #19 and # 20 I've just read volume 2 and volume 3 at once, in a frenzy, like I was a zombie that just found a fresh body in the grass. I hope you're satisfied, and proud of yourself, because TWD might be the best book in comics today. And I couldn't have found TWD at a better time, because there's not a lot at the Big Two that has me excited right now,,, except for Runaways and everything that Ed Brubaker writes.

Bah--Brubaker's a hack!

What do I like about The Walking Dead? Well, how about great pencils by Charlie Adlard, great covers by Tony Moore, and the awesome Cliff Rathburn greytone. Please don't ever switch to color The black and white suits the book perfectly, and really differentiates it from the other books out there. (BTW, another great book that uses greytone from Image is Small Gods, check that out.) And the writing on TWD is just superb You're doing a great job There is just such an aura of danger and menace that just permeates the book, at any second you know something awful could happen. And that's a good thing TWD is never boring or slow paced. In fact, I don't think I've ever read a comic book with such a sense of urgency before, the only thing else that I've found to be such a gripping read was Bendis' Daredevil and Brubaker's Sleeper. So keep the great characterization and the great twists coming, and I'm going to keep reading

And I still hate zombie movies.

Nick Rini
Queens, NY

PS - I love the long letter columns too. That way you can print lots of letters "hint hint"

Yeah, yeah... you've been printed. Happy now? And thanks for the kind words.

Robert Kirkman,
"Lovin' every minute of it (LOVIN'), Lovin' every minute of it (LOVIN')"
The slow yet steady turn of Rick is probably what I think is the greatest thing missing from most mainstream literature. I believe it is your intent to, by the time it is all said and done, make Rick the "bad guy". And if so, I love it. If not, do it anyway and claim that was your idea all along

I love how there is no clear cut right or wrong, hero or villain, and how every decision good or bad is simply about survival. When it comes time for someone to "be the hero" or "the villain" it will be that more poignant because there will have been times we've rooted for or against them

I recently sold #3-20 (like a week after I got 20) because I had filled the box, I only collect the TPB of your book (no others, take that for the ego boost it is) because I feel comics, like all books are best read and then shared.

Land of the Dead: Disappointed. I know the critics thought it was Romero's best but to me it showed that if your name is George and you haven't touched your franchise in over 20 years then your first attempt back at bat will be a dud to your true fans. I thought the comparison between the undead and mexicans was anything but subtle and made the movie overly preachy (again, this is why I'm loving your book, all the social commentary is buried deep within the simple need to survive). Still haven't seen Undead and I'm still hoping your book will become a television series. Anything new to report?

Nope.

I don't have any questions this time. I've learned (as you stated in the last letter column) that all the questions I have I don't want answered in the letters column. All I can say is as long as this book is being written I'll be reading it.

Merl Key
Columbus, IN.

PS- I'd like to point out that you've made me rethink all those "dumb Kentuckian" jokes we like to tell here in Indiana. Darn

Man... you guys tell dumb Kentuckian jokes there? That's not cool We just make fun of people from Ohio here ..

Dead crew:

Hey, felias. As a HUGE fan of all things zombie, just wanted to drop you a line to let you know how happy I was to discover your comic. As opposed to writing a general stroke letter, I'd like to let you know what it is, exactly, that I like about it First, you've done a great job writing a story about people, not zombies Good idea. That's what made Romero's classic films classics in the first place. Second, this is one unpredictable comic. I never know where it's going. I love that. I can't tell you how much I hate predictable horror stories (Hollywood, I'm looking at you). Third, the artwork is excellent. Keep the zombies gory and disgusting. Do with your artwork what make-up effects can't, and what CGI continually screws up: believable depth of damage.

Oh, and I realize you plot out your stories pretty far in advance, so this might be a futile suggestion, but here it is anyway: NEVER reveal the exact cause of the zombie holocaust. If you're compelled to tell us something about the cause, keep it vague. Maybe give us contradictory explanations. Just don't tell us outright. Keep it mysterious

One last thing: I've also recently discovered a zombie novel your readers might be interested in checking out. Zombies, by Walter Greatshell Not exactly a "traditional" zombie apocalypse story, but worth a look

Keep up the great work.
Barabbas Ward

Thanks for the recommendation. You'll be happy to know that I don't have any plans to reveal the cause of the zombies.. and yes, I do have this plotted out pretty far in advance.

Dear Kirkman,
I have been looking for quite awhile a comic, any comic, to replace Cerebus. Since it had it's 300th issue I have not been able to find anything worth spending my money on. I do not go for the Super Hero genre and I tend to favor black and white. Then my local comic shop guy gave me 3 or 4 titles to check out. The first one that 'stuck' was 100 Bullets. It took time to get my hands on Walking Dead as I later found out it is a hot read. But knowing that it was black and white (and being a Zombie fan) I knew I was going to give it a try

I am glad I did. I bought the first 3 trades. They were very interesting. Admittedly, I was thrown for a loop when artists were switched but that was a mild bump in the road. I find that using the human viewpoint is rather compelling. It allows me to think 'How would I react' under these circumstances

My only criticism is that the pacing is quick. Almost too quick. It tends to not allow what is happening to sink in By the time I have an opinion or feeling about something we are into the next crises.

At Herschel's farm it may have been more realistic if the whole barn incident came up much later. It was already starting to get cold and zombie activity waning. More time in the safety of the farm, to give a false sense of security, would have set up the loss of Herschel's kids and Herschel's decline into despair better

Maybe so, but at the time I just wanted to keep things moving. In hindsight there are plenty of things I would do differently. All in all, though... I LIKE that the book moves at a quick pace.

Also, Thomas should have been on the loose longer. Thomas would have laid low for a bit before making another attack so quickly. As if he was still on that first high from beneading the first two girls and would need to come off of that before attacking again. I think he would revel in his captive prey's uncertainty and misgundance as to who was the killer. Plus it would have been a nice back drop for some Hitchcockian episode were everybody turns on each other.

I know this may sound more negative and positive but, truly, I am enjoying it immensely (not too many comics have you thinking after you stop reading) and I plan on being with you for the entire run

Good luck,
Dawson

Thanks for the kind words

Mr Kirkman

First off I'd like to say that your comic kicks some serious undead ass I've been a huge fan of the Romero style zombie world (it even influences my own artwork to a great degree) ever since I was a child. I must say that your comic lives up, and I dare say surpasses, the standard that he set for the zombie genre. And after the loss of the services of the great Tony Moore as your lead penciler you still managed to fill the void more than adequately. The comic grows better with each issue

Now, after my gratuitous butt kissing, I have a suggestion. I know that you have plot ideas and characters already made for future issues so I have no misconception that just because I come up with a potentially good idea that it will ever enter the comic. But I had thought up a nice character in case you're looking for new suggestions.

The idea is as follows. A survivalist, even before the zombie holocaust he loved to spend months in the wilderness surviving off of the natural flora, emerges from the forests around the prison area and notices that the zombies are being drawn towards the survivors. Thus he investigates only to discover the inhabitants of the prison facility. Now the kicker is that he had his best friend, his loyal dog with him the entire time. At some point the dog was infected by the zombie "virus". Now being the loyal (if simple-minded) friend that he is the dog remembers all of his commands and still acts as the right hand of his master. Now, since he knows much of survival the man would be a great asset to those who inhabit the prison. But he refuses to leave his dog behind, he loves the creature

I could see this character having great depth, and it would add a new dimension to the zombies and how they are turned and to what extent they can retain humanity. Humans go bloodthirsty and yet a dig remains much as it has always been.

As I said before, I don't expect you to introduce this into the comic, but I thought I'd share the idea anyways. It's even possible you had thought of

something along
this line before now I just thought I'd give
my two cents
Keep up the excellent work.

Adam Aubin

I'm not really looking for reader suggestions on new characters, sadly. That opens up all kinds of tricky legal issues. Also, there aren't any zombie dogs in this book. I know you said you didn't expect me to use the idea, but I thought I'd let you know anyway. Thanks for the letter

Dear Storyteller of Warm Fuzzy Tales,

Are they still making this comic?!?! Just kidding. I liked the walking dead character bios. Try to put in 1st and last appearances if ya could please. How bout some maps there, Magellan? I know the prison situation is gonna break soon. Have no clue. Maybe the generator will shed some light.

Brendan Walsh

I'll try to add appearances to the bios soon. That's a good idea. The map seems like a bit more work than I'm willing or able to do at this point. Plus, I don't really like being nailed down to a set area. Knowing the prison is in Georgia, south of Atlanta is enough for me.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

Is it possible to take out a zombie if you repeatedly hit it in the head with a Walking Dead Hardcover?

Thanks,
Paul Shippe

We'll soon find out.

Yo,
Since I started reading the Walking Dead I've become obsessed with zombies. I often dream about what would happen if there really was to be a zombie apocalypse. I've also found myself searching for other zombie comic book series and holding zombie movie nights! So, thanks for everything. I'll send photos when I finally get some of the Walking Dead artwork tattooed on me

It sucks, it's late August and I've only read up to issue 20 because that's all that's arrived here in Australia! The frustration!

You're getting them about as fast as we do here.

Anyway, the artwork, depth and everything about the Walking Dead rules! It's also refreshing to see a female who's a tough as fuck, rogue zombie killer!
I'm hoping that in the issues to come you will reveal more of what the other parts of the prison look like. I almost wish I could go exploring myself

x Franca x

Now, you guys have got to stop with this zombie dreaming stuff. I mean, really... It would be a BAD THING for this to happen in real life. You're starting to creep me out. Loonies.

Hey Robert,

Well, now that we're into the twenties (big congrats) I Guess I might as well pledge my undying (pun intended) allegiance.

Firstly, thanks. It's been a long, long time since I've looked forward to any monthly comic as much as Walking Dead. Since Preacher, Starman, Transmetropolitan and Hitman wrapped up, There hasn't been much in the way of well written, well drawn, this will have an ending someday monthly fare. Dude, Walking Dead sits proudly in the ranks of all those titles I mentioned. This is, without a doubt, one of THE best comics available- Invincible being a close second, and Hunter-Killer, Hellblazer and that Vaughn guy's Ex-Machina rounding out the top five. Man, every time a new issue hits, I re-read my entire collection. It's gonna be an enjoyable hell when this gets into the sixty and seventy issue mark...

Secondly, Zombies scare the shit out of me. Creepy fucking things...
Anyway, I might as well join in the act...

- Walking Dead would suck as a movie. It needs to be said, I've been farting around in the industry long enough to know there is no way you can cram the scope of a series like this into two, or even three hours. I'd far prefer to see Walking Dead as a HBO TV series or something like it. Thirteen episode season, much like The Shield, or the Sopranos.Shit, the first two Trades are the first season, easy.... All I ask is that I get to direct.. or at the very least, Staff writer Simon Pegg gets a role, of course- but so does Bruce Campbell. I'll think up some casting ideas . . .

- Was it just me, or was anyone else expecting a little more from Land Of The Dead? Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed it- a lot, after all, Zombies, Romero, and Asia Argento(mmmmmmm)...but I just thought it'd be a bit more....epic, or something More scope More Tom Savini. More zombies. less zombies shooting guns!!!!

- Speaking of Mr. Savini- Worst Zombie film ever? Children of the Living Dead Tom buys it in the first Fifteen minutes, and it sucks worse and worse after that. And I'm the dumbass who bought the DVD..... .House of the Dead being a close second ..

- The Zombie Vs Shark n Zombie Flesh Eaters does indeed rock.
- Don't be thinking you'd be screwing the fans by doing the occasional Walking Dead Annual or special I'd happily shell out for it, and I'm sure others would. It might be a good place to spotlight other parts of zombie invasion, or show other characters While leaving the primary series to Rick and the gang. Hell, I think it'd be cool if a special or yearly one shot flashed back to the first few days of the infestation- You might say that we've seen stuff like that before, in films and such, and you'd be right- but we've never seen it get the Kirkman treatment

- For fucksake, don't let Tyresse have gotten bitten
- I get this funny feeling that Rick and Lori are heading for a nasty break up .
- For the life of me, I can't understand the comparisons to 28 fucking days later, okay, a guy wakes up from a coma.and that's about where it ends, they weren't even zombies, for Christ sake. And 28 days really got boring after they left London

- Since Simon Pegg keeps hassling you, do you know if the rumors about a sequel to Shaun of the Dead are true?

- I for one, am happy to never know the cause of the zombies
- Any chances of seeing zombie "sweeper" teams, in the lines of the sheriff's crew from the end of Night of The Living Dead? Surely some of them are still around .. ?

keep Axel
around for a while, huh? He seems okay,
for a convicted felon....

- Anything big planned for issue twenty five? A double sized issue? Please?
- The intestines getting caught in the rib cage was hysterical
- Coming to Australia anytime soon? Supanova, Brisbane- I'll buy you a beer.
- Isn't it about time some one at Marvel started to give Nova a bit more credibility? Tell Bendis he needs to put him in New Avengers.

Anyway, amigo, thanks for a great read. This series is just as great as Preacher ever was- and man, that is no small praise. I'm in for the long haul....Or at least until the dead rise and you need to stop writing and evacuate to a defenseable location

Cheers,
Jake Reedy

To answer one of your questions, Issue 25 is just going to be another regular-sized, regular-priced issue. I figured it'd be better to just keep plugging along rather than get (further) behind schedule trying to put a bigger issue together. It'll still be cool, though... I mean... stuff is going to happen and all.

Hello Mr Kirkman,

I'm just writing to say that last Wednesday was my lucky day. I went to the comic book store and someone brought in their run of The Walking Dead #2-10. Don't ask me why. The owner of the store asked me if I wanted them. I bought them for cover price and read them all in one sitting. I really love the book and I'm going to get the rest of them next week and be up to reading it monthly. I thank Charlie, Cliff and Tony are also doing some great work as well. I love the Day and Dawn of the Dead. But zombie stuff has been sucking lately so I thank you very much for your work on this book and I couldn't agree with you more running zombies SUCK. Thanks for your time

Cary Shenk

Cool. You keep reading them, we'll keep making them.

Well, that's it for another really long letters column for the Walking Dead. We'll see you in a few weeks or less (yeah, we'll be catching up on the schedule over the next few issues. That's good news, right?)

Robert Kirkman

• Let's

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

And like lightening here's issue 23. As you can see this issue shipped a mere two weeks after issue 22 and in another two weeks you'll see issue 24 on the shelves. We're trying to catch up on the schedule a bit and so these three issues are shipping in RAPID succession.

It's not the most idea of situations for retailers, I know... but we've got to get that hardcover out in time for Christmas so I'm hoping you people will be understanding in light of that.

Also, in an effort to get this book to the printer really quick-like we're going to be cutting the letters column back a bit (well, A LOT). We should be back to our regularly scheduled insanely long letters column next month, so don't worry.

Now, let's answer some letters, okay?

Once again, great Issue. Who's Michonne talking to? I think she's talking to her dead boyfriend. She seems a lil' nutty like that. I mean, notice she didn't mention what she was up to with Tyreese? Never try to keep secrets from the voices in your head people! It'll only result in getting your ass killed... of course, head voice might have to take a number after Carol!

Wheeee! I just love all this soapy smut! But please, less naked Glenn, alright?

You can't have one without the other. Beggars can't be choosers y'know.

Sure hope Allen pulls through if for no other reason than to answer the question first posed (but never satisfactorily answered) in Day Of The Dead about whether or not severing the inflicted area of the body would save the victim. It'd also be great if he was bitter and resentful to Rick for cutting his leg off. Talk about your irony.

Anyway, great job once again all. I still don't like Rick much these days, but he really did pull a solid with Allen so I'm willing to reserve judgement for a bit longer.

Remembering to sign this time,
Darryl Etheridge

P.S. I don't remember ever reading what you thought of Land Of The Dead.
Well?

Just read some past letters columns. I've talked about Land of the Dead about a billion times now and I'm NOT doing it again.

Sigh.

I liked it. I thought it was a good flick. I think the only reason it doesn't SEEM as strong as the other three is because we've all seen the other three nine thousand times and we're really grown to love

them. Also, I imagine the slightly longer director's cut will be better. It's certainly no Phantom Menace. I liked it. Tell your friends.

Dear TWD crew,

Issue #21 was fantastic! The whole team really pulls together to make the comic better than what you'd expect from the average comic. I like that Robert's writing is through the characters, not about them. Case in point: three of my favorite panels in the book happen on page 3 when Rick mutters "That's not how it works..." to himself while thinking of what to do. That's great. I tend to compare movies and comics a lot (both visual media) and that progression of those three panels is the sort of thing an actor would think to do, but probably wouldn't appear in the script that way. It shows the reader that you're really in the minds of the characters. Charlie, as usual, does a great job of showing shades of emotion in the characters' faces. I love that; it reinforces the ebb and flow of the story's emotional level. As for Cliff, I can imagine that for some it would be very limiting to only work in grey tones, but he continues to enhance the art to such a degree that I can imagine a plethora of colors in the characters' world.

I thought the Clive Barker quote from Andrew Garcia-Price was pretty neat. I had never thought about the zombie concept in that sort of way. I had always assumed that it was just a personification of the basic fear of death. Ya' know, death persuing the living, never tiring, never slacking. Death consuming the living. I guess that's why I tend to prefer "slow zombies" over their running brethren, because I feel it better embodies the slow but steady approach of death.

It's funny to read Issue 21 and the stuff that happens with Michonne and then read the letters responding to issue 19 and all the people who were buzzing about her! I doubt any of them expected her to turn out to be some reality TV influenced nutjob! The last two pages were great, it totally captured that "video journal" thing that is the cornerstone of most reality TV. The whole thing seems to explain some of her actions as well: failing in line with the 'leader' (Rick); becoming a team player; and the stuff with Tyreese - making alliances with established 'players' based on sexual attraction? - total reality TV. I'm now interested in seeing whether she was always crazy or it was just the situation of the zombies that made her snap.

I think you're reading into things just a bit when you associate Michonne's character arc to reality TV. She wasn't so much doing a video journal as she was talking to someone I didn't want you to see. Don't sully this comic by comparing any part to reality

TV. It's insulting. Now, if you'll excuse me, Survivor is on tonight and I have popcorn to make.

Course, in a couple of issues you'll probably reveal that she was speaking into a microscopic camera to her government superiors or something like that and I'll be the one who looks crazy! ^_^

At any rate, keep up the stupendous work!
-Craig Dresser

Wait, GOVERNMENT SPIES!! MICROSCOPIC CAMERAS... that's not a bad idea... maybe she's working for the aliens.

Yo Robert Dude!

I had this dream last night where I was reading The Walking Dead issue 500 the cover was so kewl, Rick was standing on a pile of dead humans. Inside he was a zombie/cyborg working alongside an all grown up Duane, who seemed like a mad scientist. Only thing is they were taking out the humans. Wierd stuff man, please get out of my head! Oh by the way I saw "40 year old virgin" and you're famous now even more :) he was reading a copy of marvel team-up (#4 I think) with Iron Man & Hulk. I got wierd looks in the theatre when I raised my fist and screamed "KIRKMAN RULES" anyhow if anyone else has any kirkman sightings out of the funnybooks please let me know!

Rob Steal

I don't want to alarm you in regards to your "dream" but what you were actually seeing was a little thing I like to call "the future." Have I blown your mind yet? No? Well what if I was to say that was actually issue FIFTY!

Yeah, I know. I'll give you a minute.

Dear Walking Dead,

Before I say anything, I'd like to say thanks for printing my letter in issue 20, no one has ever printed something I wrote, so thanks.

With that said, the idea of having the bite kill a person, but not turn a person, has got to be one of my favorite ideas you've had and adds a fresh twist on the zombie genre once bitten rule. And I loved the panels when Rick figured it out, props to Adiard on his spot on art. I also feel extremely bad for carol, I didn't think I'd give a shit, but there ya have it. Your storytelling is so good I actually care about all the characters. Cept Otis, I did at first, but after that nigger comment, he can get torn to bits for all I care. I mean even after being saved by Michonne and realizing that Tyresse might be the one of the few people he'll know for the rest of his life you'd think he'd drop the racist thing.

You'd think... but apparently he's just a shit head.

That said I love where the book is going, I love that it's a people story with zombies, not the other way around. And most importantly, I love that its a never ending story, I mean if the book last that long, we could see Carl grow up in to one bad ass survivor, cowboy hat and his daddy's axe. Just saying it'd be really fucking awesome.

I don't know if we'll be around THAT long but I'd certainly dig it if we were.

Finally, in my last letter, I realized I didn't name, the comic book store I go to every Wednesday, Cosmix (in Montreal QC) and that made me feel like an asshole cuz the owners are fucking great, had they not suggested the book, I'd have never ever read it. Which would have been a real shame.

Sincerely,
Jon Maggio

p.s. seing most everyone get to plug something can I plug my own website www.jonmaggio.com

Thanks for the fine read again.

Y'know, technically you're getting to plug TWO things. Your comic shop and your website. The way I see it that's just not fair so I think I'm going to delete the plug for your website.

So does Image have a new rule that every Kirkman book has to be released on the same day every month? Two months in a row Invincible and TWD have come out the same day, and this week Battle Pope was added to the mix. Not that I'm complaining. Getting a nice big chunk of Kirkman once a month isn't a bad thing by any means. And at least I've got MTU to fill the gap.

Well, that's my fault. I seem to turn the books in on the same week. For some reason it always seems like the letters columns, lettered pages, and coloring for all the books ends up getting completed at the same time. It's weird.

About Issue 21: 6 panels of "THUNKS!!"? Damn! I can't help but wonder if someone's going to make an artificial foot for Allen (if he survives, that is), or if he's just going to have to hobble around the prison yard. How would you even go about making a foot? I guess Herschel would probably be able to fix something up. Why am I so concerned about this? I'm glad you're featuring Axel more now. He seems really interesting to me for some reason. Maybe it's because he looks like Santa.

While reading the letter column to 21 it appears everyone wants posters. Well, when I was at WWC, Tony was selling large-sized prints of his TWD covers...why not just market them? I only had the cash to get one (issue 17), but I'm already hoping I'll be able to get a couple more next year.

There will be a full-sized, full color poster available early 2006. How's that for service?

Speaking of WWC, while I was at your booth, I was trying to decide what to buy of yours (seeing as how I already had all of Invincible and TWD, my choices were limited), one of the guys working there actually talked me out of buying Cloudfall or Brit (it was Sunday and I was low on cash, so I could only get one) in favor of Tales from the Bully Pulpit. Considering you call it "one of the best comics ever made" on the back cover, you might not be that upset, but that's seven dollars I didn't spend on your stuff. Long story short: make sure the guys working the booth next year only try to sell your stuff.

Hmmm. Looks like I may need to have a talk with young Benito Cereno.

One last thing...thanks to TWD I have my first official "comics friend" after reading for more than ten years. Sure, every week I have to listen to him say "Damn, when are we going to get a new Issue of Walking Dead?!" but it's worth it. Thanks for that.

Aaron Stege

Well, you and your new friends will be happy to know that I'm currently working on the letters column for the next issue RIGHT THIS MINUTE. It'll be in stores before you know.

Brave Sir Kirkman,

Ahh...late night letter writing. What a better time? I forgot everything I wanted to write. I guess I'll wing it. By the numbers...

1. I am quite pleased that I'll be picking up issue 22 on my birthday in September. I'll be 22, as well... Luckily I age by years while you remain faithful to the monthly system.

Yeah, 22 in September... uh... sorry about that.

2. I am a huge fan of your book and it gave me faith that monsters have awesome stories and not just blood and guts for entertainment.

21. The cover to issue 21 is one of my favorite comic covers of all time. The butterfly is what did it for me.

C. I'm done numbering.

About 2 months after I read the first collection of TWD and had a Romero-thon with my friends over winter break I made a decision. Perhaps life altering. See, I have wanted to be a filmmaker ever since I saw Superman when I was four. Lately, with the drudgery of college bringing me down I thought I ought to just go for it and make a movie. With some influence from TWD and Romero I decided to do a zombie film. With heart. And brains. My plans for the film were to get some recognition and hopefully (beyond hope) get a chance to say "I could direct TWD should it be transferred to film and played on a certain home box office network" (which, to get the full story in, would be the best medium in my opinion). And as soon as I began scripting my flick I heard TWD might get made before I do. I was devastated. But not devastated enough to give up. I will hopefully start filming my zombie flick in late November and if I can cut it together quick enough maybe, just maybe, it might get noticed and give me a little film cred. Even if I don't, this is one book I'd love to see faithfully adapted to film. Keep up the great work on the page and I'll keep spending money to read your books (all of them) even though I work at my comic shop and could just as easily read for free.

Yeah, who knows IF Walking Dead will ever get adapted to TV or film. I'm not losing any sleep over it. I'm happy to focus on the comic.

This ramble is over,
Sam Whitewater

P.S. What is with the alien invasion discussions? I only started reading the last couple of letter columns (can't find all the back issues) and I must have missed something. That's just what I need, zombies and aliens. Together. If that happens, I have to see a zombie and an alien holding hands and skipping through fields of dead bodies. That would be an awesome visual...

It's pretty much public knowledge that this book is going to "jump the shark" at some point after issue 75. That's when I'm going to start throwing in aliens for no damn reason. It's a running joke here in the letters column. Thanks for playing.

Dear Kirkman,

So right off the bat I ask to be a zombie and get turned down, now you tell a guy that you'll think about it. Just kill off Glenn. That's pretty much me...

Oh, and good job with the bite just killing them, not infecting them. I think we talked about this before, but a lot of people are confused about this. Everyone is infected already! Awesome Day of the Dead moment in issue 21 by the way! I expected them to cauterize the wound, but I like the way you handled it.

I did so much research for that I think I could successfully amputate a limb at this point. I'm glad you liked it.

Can't wait until issue 25! Here's to seeing a guy get carried off and feasted upon by zombies, leaving only his severed arm squeezed within the blood-pressure monitoring device! Or something equally cool.

I'm dying to have a blond pregnant woman and a black police officer land a helicopter on the prison roof or something. It's sooooo tempting.

Questions:

1. Will 25 be a big deal in this book? (I ask this thinking to myself that every new issue of a non-canceled comic involving

zombies is a big deal)

25 will just be another issue. It's regular-sized and regular-priced... there's some cool stuff planned, but I try to do that EVERY issue.

2. How much did you love Land of the Dead? There are lots of haters out there.

See above.

3. What did you like most about it? Other than sequel possibilities.

I honestly think it had the best, most likeable characters out of any of the Romero films... and they all lived, which makes for GREAT sequel possibilities.

4. Did you know that the word "Zombie" (as referring to "a soulless corpse said to have been revived by witchcraft" formerly, "the name of a snake-deity in voodoo cults of or deriving from West Africa and Haiti.") was first recognized in writing in 1872 by Schele de Vere in "Americanisms"? It described, "Zombi, a phantom or a ghost, not unfrequently heard in the Southern States in nurseries and among the servants." Neat huh...

Now I know, and knowing is half the battle...

5. Did you SEE Zombie King #0!

Frank sent me pages before it even came out. I saw the cow before anyone else. Lucky me... I guess. Neat book. I wish Frank would do more.

So maybe the guy to win the Make Me-A Zombie contest could be the guy with the most printed letters (unless Piers wins...damn that guy).

Love,
Chris Pitts

I think you'll be happy to know that you're slowly edging Piers out in the most-letters-printed category. That fucker must have gotten too busy or something.

Robert,

Good afternoon. First, I would like to say that I have been reading comics since 1989 and never felt compelled to write to a writer/ comic letter column until now.

I have been onboard Walking Dead since issue #3. A friend of mine had turned me on to it. Since I'm always looking for a good read, I took his advice and haven't regretted it. I even sought out your other works. Invincible and Marvel Team-up are very good solid reads, but it's TWD I look forward to every month. Even when Tony stopped doing the interiors, I wanted to stop getting it, that's how fond I was of the way he drew these characters. But I found that the writing was so good that it kept me hooked. Tell Charlie that I have since come to love his work as well.

Tony Who?

You have become one of the great writers working in comics today. My problem with Issue #21 is this, The last few pages are so predictable. I saw this BJ with Michonne and Tyreese coming a mile away. I'm not saying this to sound like a literary expert on story construction, it's just that I thought you would go somewhere else with it. I didn't expect you to play it safe and go for the cheap mass audience thrill.

What gave it away? The fact that the cover for issue 22 with them KISSING was online months ago? Or did you actually see it coming in the story? I'll try to keep the covers a little less spoiler-filled from now on.

I was going to wait until Issue #22 came out before I sent this, but I came to the conclusion that there is no way for you to undo what's been done.

Hit me back
Clyde in NJ

It's all leading to something. Don't sweat it.

Robert,

I'VE GOT A VERY BAD FEELING ABOUT LORI'S BABY...

You've stated that the origin of the malady will not be a storyline, although in Issue 21 it's nature and infectious nature got me thinking. If Lori's baby is "born dead" (gulp) what would happen or even more horrific, if the baby perishes in utero and then...

...well you get the picture unless that's part of the plan.

I'm not ruling anything out--but chances are if it happened in the Dawn of the Dead remake it's not going to happen here.

I've been a comic fanboy for close to 40 years and truly thought there was no new concepts. I also thought it seldom that my emotions run high with comics, and long to 'feel something' (although I'm not gonna take it up the ass from Luke Cage, like Jessica Jones in Alias when she wanted to 'feel something').

WHAT?!

With Walking Dead AND yourself, both have occurred - a bold new concept with genuine shudders and creeps. You also convey the love of comics and comic fanboys, as I'm still amazed with ALL the letters you print and commentary.

Except for THIS issue, right? Everyone's going to HATE me and think I'm an asshole after THIS issue. Man, you guys are so quick to turn on a guy.

Loyalty goes both ways - I since picked up all your past work, just gotta get Tech Jacket.

Thanks again - hope I'm wrong about the baby, as that would hit rival Ennis for comic shocks.

John Panno

Or, y'know... it WOULD have if you hadn't given it away in the GODDAMN LETTERS COLUMN. Jerk.

Kirkman and Co.:

Just dropping you another letter to say how much I'm loving the ride so far. The Walking Dead continues month after month (give or take...) to be the best thing in print. Consistently, issue after issue, you put out a comic that is better than the one before it with no signs of slowing. In my previous letter to you printed in Issue #12's Letter Hacks, I (Who have been a HUGE fan of the zombie genre for the last half of my life) told you that I prefer the Walking Dead to any of Romero's works. While you pretty much said that I was a blasphemer, I still stand by my statement- Night of the Living Dead, Dawn of the Dead and Day of the Dead are three of my favorite movies in my collection, and yet, I'd take the run of The Walking Dead over them nine times out of ten. As such, I'm glad I was able to provide you with the "highest compliment paid to you"... You deserve it, man. Your book kicks mucho ass.

I still think if those movies were 24 hours long each you'd change your mind in a second. I just have more time to play with here--that's the only difference. Thanks again, though... it means a lot that you think so.

I've read through the entire run of the series (from issue #1 through whatever happens to be the latest issue at the time) going on ten or so times now, and by the sounds of a lot of the other fans sounding off in Letter Hacks, I'm not the only one. The Walking Dead pulls you in and doesn't stop to twist, holding your attention the entire time, every time through. Everyone I know that I've introduced to the series has read it through in one go, reading as much of it as they can. Then, when they're finished, the question I tend to hear the most is "Is this all you've got?"

There was a point where I was lending my Walking Dead

trades out to as many people as I could get to read them... at one point, a new issue was being passed through eleven hands... Then, I decided that they would have to start paying up in order to keep reading. I've even offered to pick up the issue for them as most of them likely haven't ever stepped foot in a comic store. You deserve the cash for the perfect, perfect book you've provided us with.

Wow, man--you're an all right guy. Really.

Speaking of buying your stuff, put me down as another vote in favor of Posters... I'd be all over a Walking Dead poster! By the sounds of it, the cover of Issue #9 seems to be the popular vote (and I tend to agree- it's my favorite cover thus far) but an original Tony Moore piece done especially for the poster would kick mucho ass as well. I'm also looking forward to December's Walking Dead hardcover volume and whatever goodies you're going to include in it... I can't wait! While you're at it, make any other Walking Dead crap you can get out there... t-shirts, action figures, decorative toilet lid covers- If it's Walking Dead, I'll buy it. (I guess I'm just a consumer whore...)

I'll be getting right on those decorative toilet lid covers. I can't WAIT!

It's good to see that the books are getting back on time... while I don't REALLY mind the delays (I used to read Battle Chasers), I still find myself getting anxious waiting for the next issue to find out what crazy twists you're going to unleash on Rick and the rest of the crew. It's also good to see that sales keep climbing... It's only a matter of time before HBO starts knocking on your door to produce a Walking Dead ongoing TV series... (Fingers crossed...)

Issue 21, as always, set the bar for the series even higher... How the hell do you do it, man? The scene with Carl and Sophia is one of the best the book has had to offer thus far (and that says a lot). It's stuff like this that make your book stand out from everything else zombie related. Brilliant, man... simply brilliant.

I'm digging Michonne so far, but like the rest of the fans, I'm dying to know her back story... It'll also sweet to see her in combat when push comes to shove. She seems like she'll be pretty cool in a combat situation. Cool twist on her at the end of Issue 21... I wonder just who it is that she thinks she's "conversing" with... Having her pursue Tyreese is a sweet play, too. A nice "soap opera" addition to the story with Carol catching a glimpse of Michonne helping Tyreese "let off some steam". By the looks of next month's cover, Michonne's just starting to stir things in the jail up too... Very nice.

If not a bit predictable...

The only thing that I question from Issue 21 is the fact that Axel is armed...

I know he's the only prisoner left and hasn't shown any signs of untrustworthiness but I didn't think that Rick and the rest of the group would take any chances after what went down with Dexter. I'm also surprised to see that the group is giving Patricia as many freedoms as she's getting after issues 18 and 19... In a situation such as theirs, you shouldn't get many chances.

Honestly what are they going to do? Lock her up and baby-sit her? It's not an ideal situation and they're making due. I doubt they'll be giving her a gun anytime soon.

Also, I'm going to take a shot in the dark and say either Glenn or Maggie is going to bite it soon... They seem to have a good thing going, and good things never last long in a world ruled by zombies. Also, I assume Billy is going to be zombie fodder soon enough as he really hasn't done much thus far... Ben and the other Billy (see, you already have too many Billys... kill one off) haven't really had much of a part in the story yet, either, and it'd be nice to see them used in some way, if only to feed the ranks of the living dead.

I would also like to commend you on your letters column, as not enough comics maintain them nowadays... It's nice to see you taking the time to answer the large amount of letters you get in a given month seeing as you're writing like fifty or

so books in a month. Another testament to how great the book is, is the very small amount of hate mail you've managed to receive, despite the open call for it. You even went as far as saying that a negative letter is guaranteed to see print and still, nothing. That said, um, kiss my ass or something... (Is that enough to have this letter see print?)

Oh, one thing I've been meaning to ask- Will the alternate version of Issue 10's cover ever see print in any way, shape or form? (You know, the one that I keep seeing online, with Rick with an axe in his hand, covered in blood, with the blanket wrapped around him? I'm pretty sure it's Mr. Adlard's art but it's hard to tell...) If it's an available variant, you must tell me where I can track one down... Every possible issue of Walking Dead must be mine! (Again, I'm a consumer whore...)

That cover is going to be used for THE WALKING DEAD SCRIPTBOOK which will be out a week or so after this issue. Buy at your own risk, though--it's got NO PICTURES. It's 40 pages for \$3.99, ask for it by name. Also, that cover is by Cliff, not Charlie.

I guess that's enough of MY ass kissing for now... Please, keep up the good work. I'll be with this book as long as you're putting it out- and that's a promise.

Corey Janson

PS- I'm also REALLY loving Invincible, too. It's great to see the diversity of work you have hitting the market. I only read it in trades, however, so the wait time in between sucks... Nonetheless, I can't wait to see what you have in store for that book as well. (Okay, NOW I'm done ass kissing)

Well, if you hate waiting for the trades, I've got an idea--BUY THE SINGLE ISSUES!! They've got letters columns, pin-ups, back-ups and all kinds of cool stuff.

The new woman was cool with the sword up until she started talking to no one in the jail cell. I think Rick might want to keep her locked up at night for a little longer! Lori is going to cheat on Rick again with that woman... freak! Love the book and can't wait for the next team-up book--loved Spider-Man's comments and Punisher taking the finger off! Also cannot wait for Invincible and Spider-Man's team-up soon!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

Yeah, man... the Invincible/Spider-Man Team-Up issue is going to be OFF THE HOOK, YO! I highly recommend seeking it out.

Robert,
You are terrible. (Maybe that will get this printed. You said negativity is a plus). Now that your status as a human being is out of the way, I would like to comment about your alien book "The Walking Dead".

1) #21 had my favorite cover thus far. The impending danger of the kids walking into an onslaught of zombies was a nice little bit of suspense. Adlard has a very eye catching cover style that has not been seen since those Fabry Preacher covers that I loved so much. There's not been a boring one in the bunch so far.

Yeah, Adlard's doing so GREAT covers... they get so much better starting with issue 25, though. You guys are going to be blown away. (wink!)

2) Allen is my favorite character. He is by far the most noble and is the driving force behind the book. Allen is a born leader and if I were female I would want to bear his children. Go Allen! All sarcasm aside, I do like the way that you have used this character to demonstrate how I believe that 99% of people would react to this whole situation. Granted, he's a whiny little bitch, but I believe that the realism that he brings to the table justifies his existence.

Allen is one of my favorite characters in the book. I promise.

3) Some of these people seem pretty damn comfortable. I am assuming that you will not have this level of comfort last much longer. I crave (brains) a full scale invasion by the zombies in the worst way and I hope you deliver soon (brains). I'm talking massive deaths and thousands of zombies raining from (brains) the heavens. There's a reason that almost everyone is dead, and there is no way that those fences are going to hold when thousands of zombies are pushing against them. You write entertaining dialogue, so an issue where everyone learns to farm properly might be okay, but massive zombie attack might be fun too. Just a thought. You think it over and get back to me. (damn sarcasm again... brains...)

You've read this comic before right? Now... which one would I choose? A boring issue-long story where the characters talk about stuff and learn to farm or a non-stop action romp where zombies invade and kill everyone? I gotta say, I'm going for the talking issue 9 times out of 10. All joking aside, you guys won't be longing for zombie action much longer... you're about to get your fill... in a few issues. Stay tuned.

Questions....

1) Michonne is a slut. Can I get her number? I have a special phone that can call comic book characters, so no obvious "she's not real" jokes. In fact, I'm the one she was talking to at the end of #21, so I don't even need her number.

Man, can I get that number? I created her so I should get a free one. I think I'll have Charlie give her a boob job. Hey--can you get the number for Spider-Man, too? I'm a big fan.

2) Any chance of a spin-off book that focuses on different characters in the world and what is going on outside the core group? I think it might destroy the mystery of what's going on, but I would love to have a companion series to read every other week.

No plans for a spin-off right now... or at this point... ever. But who knows what the future may bring.

3) Will Invincible ever show up in these pages? Maybe a cameo as a zombie...

No chance.

4) Does the I.Q. of the zombie allow them to do anything other than walking and attacking? Could they swim, or ride a bike? Or possibly use the internet to write a letter to this column? (brains)

They're wicked awesome at volley ball... but I don't want to spoil things past saying that.

Okay, I'm done. Please print this. It is the second letter in 20 years of comic reading that I have sent, so you must be doing something right. Thanks so much for keeping me entertained.

Justin "slam-bizzle" Manis

((please print this. I will send you some pecan pie if you do))

If I don't find a freshly baked PECAN PIE in my P.O. Box next time I check it... I'm going to reprint this issue just so I can take this letter out. And... and I'll kick you in the nuts or something.

Okay folks, that's it for this month. I'll make it up to you soon. Sorry this letters page is so short this time around.

Be sure to check out Marvel Zombies, the new five-issue mini-series Sean Phillips and I are doing for MARVEL starting in December. It's going to be really cool. I promise.

See you in a couple weeks (I promise)

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Issue 24... coming in right on the heels of issue 23. Pretty exciting stuff, huh?

Did you guys notice the last page of 22 and the first page of 23 fit together to form one image? Pretty damn cool, huh? I stole that from Erik Larsen. Erik's done all kinds of cool shit like that in Savage Dragon. If any of you reading this like superheroes at all, you should buy every trade paperback collection of that series every printed (well, one copy of each--I mean, unless you're going to read it twice or something) it's might good reading.

Be on the lookout for the Walking Dead Deluxe hardcover. It'll be in stores the first Wednesday of December and will collect the first 24 issues (yeah, that's everything up to and including this issue. Pretty cool, huh?) along with a bunch of extras like The original covers, the original proposal to image, some sketches by Charlie Adlard and Tony Moore... cool stuff. It's going to be an oversized monster of a hardcover and it'll clock in at around 600 pages. Also, it's limited edition. The print run will be kept to initial orders only... so this thing is going to retail for \$100.00. Steep, I know--but it's comparable to other volumes of this nature... and it's going to have a cool slipcase and everything.

Now let's answer some mail...

Mr. Kirkman,

Back in 1987-88, I was a youth collecting comics from "Crisis of Infinite Earths" to "DeadWorld" to "Aliens vs. Predator". In '90, I was in high school and lost interest in current comics (with exception to Spawn), and quit collecting altogether after losing nearly 90% of my comics to a storage accident. So...we get to 14 years later. I'm talking with a couple of co-workers, and found out that they both were into comics (weird thing is... I've worked with one guy for 10 years and never knew he collected comics!). To make long story short, I picked up an issue #12 (which was the newest issue at the time), and got hooked. I was referred to you by my co-workers and guys at the register. Now the reason I gave my sob story and have questions:

1) I heard "Walking Dead" doesn't print second printings, but I've got an #2 second printing. It's

the only second printing of any Walking Dead issues...Could mine be counterfeit? Your comic is pretty popular here in Indianapolis, and hard to find first printings even!

There are second printings of issues 2, 7, and 8. It's just that NONE of them have new covers. I don't like variant covers very much. The copy of issue 2, I imagine, is NOT counterfeit.

1A) This relates to question 1....Could you reprint issue #4? It's the only issue I'm missing out of your collection!

Yeah, I'll get right on that print run of ONE COPY just for you.

2) I've read in Hacks, that you've never read Deadworld? Is this correct? One aspect that's similar with Walking Dead is the fact that....Nobody's in the clear on who's gonna die next! Other than that, you guys have different themes presented in your comic. Plus, I like Vince Locke, but Moore and Adlard have the best graphics.

Well, not knowing who is going to die next is common in all horror fiction, zombie or otherwise. But yeah, never read Deadworld--until the reprints from Image started up. I've read the first issue of that.

3) Kirkman--How many Superpatriots series have you done? I have War On Terror and America's Fighting Force sans issue #3

Those are the only two. Both are four issues long. War On Terror is late, only issues 1 and 2 have shipped at this point.

4) Anyone know when Fear Agent is coming out?

October. Issue 2 should be out around the same time you're reading this. Pick it up. It's a great looking book.

5) Were you guys serious about making it to issue #75? I know EVERY comic worker wants to print gazillion issues, but to realistically make it that far,

would still be fascinating. Regardless, I'll be there for the ride till we get there. I promise!

We're in the mid 20s and the book is selling higher than it ever has. At this point--making it to issue 75 is looking more and more likely every month.

6) Adlard--What else have you've worked on?

Charlie has worked on The X-Files, Astronauts in Trouble, Nobody, White Death, Codeflesh, Green Arrow, The Establishment, Warlock, Savage (collected in 2000AD) and loads of other stuff that I can't really rattle off the top of my head.

Well, that's all...for now. I hope this series is ongoing till issue 250. I'm sure you guys can handle the workload. Later!

Fred Robinson

You and me both--I'd like to do 500 issues.

You, Mr. Kirkman, have me to thank for instigating your phone number reveal on Newsarama. Yep, I went and done you a big favor by getting Bendis all riled up. For the record though I was not one of the idiots who called you. I ain't sinking that low. Anyways, I have a few questions.

1. Have you had a chance to read Mary Roach's novel "Stiff"? While it isn't exactly about the alive kind of dead it is about the dead kind of dead. It is a highly entertaining and very detailed account of what it is like to be, well uh...dead. Seriously though, you should check it out.

Never heard of it--I may have to look into that. Sounds cool.

2. Is there any chance we will ever see Tony Moore do a fill in issue? Come on man. I know you could get him to do an all Zombie 25th issue special.

Tony has moved on.

3. Will you ever do new Battle Pope work? I was a huge fan when these first came out and would give a left nut (you ain't getting Mr. Righty) to see some new Pope stories. How hard is it to throw a few stories together from that massive cranium of yours? Also, you have a knack for finding emerging artists, so I know you can find someone good to illustrate these new stories.

Toss in the right and I'll think about it.

4. Do you hear us fans when we say that we want some FUCKIN' Moore illustrated posters?

We'll see.

5. Can I please use the space in your book to tell my wife just how much I love her and how much I appreciate that she enjoys my interests almost as much as I do? By the way she is always the first to read new issues of Walking Dead. In fact I use your book as a bribe to get her to go into the comic shop with me.

Lame.

6. One last question here. What is the next step in the Kirkman/ Bendis war?

Thomas Michael Mackiewicz

Jello wrestling.

Robert,

Thank you for bringing comics back into my life! Like others, I had been on a comic book hiatus until I found The Walking Dead. I started with the TPB's, picking up volume one while on my lunch break... I read it, and immediately bought volume two the next day, followed by volume 3 when it was released! From that point on I've been collecting the comics as they're released, and I've been buying the back issues... (In fact I just won a copy of issue #1 on ebay for \$64...) I'm really happy with the way the comic is going, though I am worried a bit about Rick. I'm worried that something bad is going to happen to him... Hopefully you'll keep him alive for a long while. Alrighty, onto the numbered topics, where I write a comment or question with a number in front of it, and you post a response...

1. I highly enjoy Charlie Adlard's work, so don't get on my case about this very small gripe about his zombies. No, it has nothing to do with their hair... But their eyes. The only thing I don't like about Charlie's zombies are the eyes.. They're black holes with white lit up dots for eyes, so it looks like they're monsters or something. They should have human eyes (though glazed over with cataracts in most cases), they're not monsters or demons, they're dead human beings. But besides that, good work Charlie!

I just flipped through Volume 3 and I didn't find one zombie like that. He's done that from time to time, yes, but it's not how he draws zombies exclusively. There's a lot of variety there.

2. Action figures. Get them made. Seriously. You could have two versions of the characters made! Like, one figure of the character before the zombie plague, and one of the character during the disaster! It'd be cool to have figures of Rick and Shane as cops!

We'll see, no plans for toys as of yet.

3. Get the damn posters out already! And you better not respond to this with "I'll look into it"! And uhh.. if by the time this is printed (You better print it! I just spent \$64 on one of your comics!), good job on getting those posters out!

I'll look into it.

4. Animated series. A lot of letters I've read have talked about who should be cast as who for a HBO series.. I say instead of a live action show, have an animated series, like they did for Spawn! That way the characters would still look the same... You'd just have to find some voices!

I'd prefer live action, myself.

Once again, thanks a ton for making TWD, and keep up the good work! That goes to all of you who work TWD!

-Yancy Gotshall

**On behalf of the entire creative team,
THANKS.**

Robert,
It's good to see how rabid the fans of The Walking Dead are for your book. It shows you are really connecting with your fan base. As I said in my letter published, "This is one of the best books on the market today. I can see what the strong appeal is." That letter was also published in a micro-press pub called Fantastic Fanzine as a review, hence the grading scale which seemed to cause some of your fans to take offense. Therefore, I have prepared an appropriate defense.

First of all, I stand by my grading scale. I've been reading and, yes, even collecting comics since the mid-1970's, so I have a pretty broad perspective on comics, and I think I "grade" books pretty fairly. Let's say Alex Ross, George Perez, and Frank Miller get an A+. Does Charlie rank with these guys yet? Only if he is your current personal fave. If I were to grade issue #21, I'd have to bump him up to a B/B-. He is growing as an artist. Just looking at the characters' eyes in various shots shows an amazing depth and variety of emotions. And nice use of gray tones leaves no need for color in this book. I think giving him an "A" now would be doing him a disservice. Are you telling me the guy has reached his peak? I think not.

Secondly, I stick to my point about not enough zombie action. This is a personal preference. One reader referred to me as a "zombie comic guru" and I'll take that as a compliment. I like the blood and gore. I like it in the movies and I like it in my zombie comics. I enjoyed the issue, I just would have liked a scene or two of brains hitting a wall, y'know? I realize the title Walking Dead refers not only to the zombies but the dead-men-walking humans left to deal with them as well. I'm a fan. I buy the book. I'm just asking for more zombies, that's all.

As far as soap opera is concerned, this book is top notch. Lots of characterization and interaction between the large and diverse cast. Great stuff. But look through issue #21. Where are the zombies? Other than a couple shots of them on the other side of a chain link fence, they are nowhere to be found. Was the issue intense anyway? Yes! The foot-chopping scene was chilling and revealed the morbidity of what the world has become. Tension between characters was upped in several scenes. The plot moves forward. This is a good thing. Lack of zombie action is a bad thing.

My long-time pal Stuart Kerr wrote the first incarnation of Arrow Comic's Deadworld. I used to tell him the same thing. More zombie action! And he never told me to F off.

I save my ultimate compliment for last: I plunked down my hard-earned money for this book, and I'm going to continue to do so. I spent more than a cursory 15 minutes reading it, and even took the time to offer my personal thoughts in writing. Re-read that letter. I don't say this is the greatest comic in the history of comics. I don't say that, in fact, it's the greatest work of the English language. I do say that it's "one of the best on the market today."

I certainly don't expect you, Robert, to change your vision for my sake. But you've got a pretty big letters section, which tells me you want to know what fans think. So here's to honest communication between comic fans. And here's to The Walking Dead.

"The Peanut Gallery"
Ralph Griffith

Thanks for setting the record straight, Ralph. I'll put you down in the "wanting more zombie action" column of fandom. You'll be happy to know that I too have been craving some zombie action... so starting next issue, you'll probably be getting just a little bit more. That said, this book is always going to have long spells with no zombies. That's just the nature of the book.

I just finished reading issue 21 and it inspired me to write to you guys. This is far and away the best comic in the business. I am a big reader of Marvel, DC, Image and many independent companies and this is sooo much better than anything anyone else is doing right now. The key to this story is not the zombies but the humans and how well Kirkman develops them while at the same time bringing in new ones at the right time. This work is pure genius and will be remembered in the same light as early Frank Miller, Alan Moore type stuff.

Chad Morash

Tell that to Ralph Griffith--that guy wants more zombies and gave Charlie a B/B-... the dick. (wink, you know I love you Ralph).

Mr. Kirkman,

I know this a long shot, but I figure - what the hell. I run (but unfortunately, don't own) a small comic shop in Bloomington, IN, and out of our 30 subscribers, I've gotten 20 hooked on your work. Well, that's a lie. The work hooked them, I just shoved it under their noses. Folks are addicted to Cloudfall, Battle Pope [I loaned them my old FUNKOTRON trades], Invincible, Tech Jacket, Walking Dead, Marvel Team - Up, Marvel 2099 - I'm sorry. I should've just written your library.

If I paid for gas, lodging, and a beer from the local brewery if you drink, would you ever consider a visit to the shop?

Again, a long shot, but I figured, what the hell. Thanks.

Andrew Rosenbarger

I just don't have the time for these kinds of things these days. Sorry. I've got way too much work to do for any road trips.

Dear Letter Hacks,

Well, you're just not satisfied are you Kirkman? First you renew my interest in comic books with Invincible, then you make me fall in love with zombies through TWD. I hope you're happy. Anyway after picking up the Invincible trades, Ross at A+ comics insisted that I buy TWD, he even offered me a full refund if I didn't like it (tricky devil). So here I am once again spending my hard earned cash on yet another wonderful book of yours. TWD has gotten me thinking, I need to be "prepared" in the event of a full blown zombie invasion (not too prepared mind you, because if you're the sort of person who's really ready for zombies, you're probably so crazy you'll die soon anyway) anyway, here's my plan to escape Lexington in the event of "ZMOG! ZOMBIES!". I'm in a particularly bad part of the city from a "ravenous flesh eating corpse" standpoint right on the edge of downtown, between the Police station, the university and three

Hospitals. The first place zombies will be taken is either to the police station or the hospital so I've gotta act fast, as soon as I see reports of an epidemic involving cannibalism and infected bites, I'm gonna hop on my bike (there's no way I'm taking a car, have you SEEN the traffic in this town?) For protection I've got one of those ornamental piece of shit Katana's, sure it'll fall apart after a beheading or two, but it's light and better than nothing. At which point I cut across campus (which should be fairly deserted at night) and head towards the mall, once there I meet a friend (it's cool, he's in on this too) who has an apartment nearby, and happens to own a rifle. If the Zombies have overtaken the city at this point the two of us grab his truck and make for Wal-Mart (which will undoubtedly be full of zombies, I mean how many people are in Wal-Mart at any given time? Hopefully we can take them out, but if we can't it's back to the truck) We load up on essentials after clearing the zombies: gas, food, ammunition, guns, and camping equipment. Once we're supplied we make for that castle outside of town, (you know the one that rich guy built for his wife before she left him) I know the house inside burned down but the walls are still standing, and comeon it's a freaking castle! We hop the wall, kill maybe one or two zombies inside since no one really lives there and hey, we're set up for quite a while. Anyway what do you think? Want in?

Yor ob'd't,
Brent Lengel

That's it, I'm MOVING.

Crikey Kirkman!

#21 had the best twist ending so far, as far as I'm concerned. It's going to be fun finding out what exactly is up with Michonne and all that Fourth-Wall-breaking stuff, and it's also going to be fun to see how you play with that technique; yeah having her go all She-Hulk and talk directly to the readers would be a bit much, but you can still play with the idea without harming the serious tone of the book. As you did in the penultimate page of #19 in fact. Good stuff.

Also interesting was the developing relationship between Michonne and Tyreese; it's natural for people to gravitate towards those who are similar to themselves, whether that's in terms of interests, political affiliation or skin colour, and this development will make for some interesting stories I think. Is Tyreese's attraction to Michonne just a matter of them being the only black members of the "community", or is there something else? And how will it affect poor Carol? You've done a great job of building up a complex series of relationships between the characters, and it makes for a great read.

Oh and that Dave fellow who wrote to you in #21 sounds like he shops at my old comic shop in Canterbury. There can't be too many Debbies running comic shops. Small world.

kelvin green

p.s. this is the first time I've ever written to a comic.

Again, Michonne was talking to someone off panel not the reader. The person off panel wasn't THERE but we'll learn more on that later.

Masters Kirkman et al,

In issue 19's Letter Hacks, Corby Daniel mentioned how the horror genre will parallel the socio-political climate of the times. I remembered reading

an article in the University of Pittsburgh newspaper about a professor who was writing a book about this parallel, specifically films. I Googled for about an hour and found the article online. Professor Adam Lowenstein has written a book to be released in December entitled "Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film." I thought you and your readers might be interested. I'll pick it up. At that time of the article (4/4/05) he felt that it was too soon for the trauma of 9/11 to be available to film. I agree but I feel that your comic addresses the trauma not only of 9/11 but also of the current climate in our nation. Kudos for providing a cathartic and entertaining read.

First question: Have you considered going the Spring Pittsburgh Comic-Con? It's a small show but it's very zombie-centric. Both Romero and Savini attend along with assorted zombie actors.

I went back when I was doing Battle Pope, 2002 I think. Haven't been back. I got to walk through the Monroeville Mall though (the one from Dawn of the Dead) THAT was pretty cool. I wouldn't be opposed to going back.

First observation: Slow zombies are much more scarier than fast zombies? I asked my four year old (the true test) and he agrees. I've played zombie with him and his friends and they always get creeped out by slow zombie daddy, fast zombie daddy is just silly. Unfortunately its not considered proper for me to read TWD to my son but we did discuss the cover to issue 19 in great detail. We both thought the sword-wielding lady with the tamed zombies was really cool.

For once, we all agree.

Second question: I know you are prolific, but are you planning to start anything new? Any original ideas you'd like to pursue? Any existing characters you'd like to tackle?

I'm always coming up with new ideas for creator-owned series. I'm currently exclusive to Marvel and can't indulge. I've got a couple I just can't wait to do, it should be cool stuff. I'd also like to get my mitts on Spider-Man one of these days, in a regular series capacity--more than just Marvel Team-Up.

Third question: Did Bendis really baby-sit you?!! That would explain a lot!

Well, it would certainly explain my attraction to bald women. But yeah, I grew up on the same street as Brian. He's considerably older than me and from time to time, he'd baby sit my brother and I while my parents went out. This was well before my family moved to Kentucky.

Third observation: I was just going to buy the trades but decided to track all of the back issues, primarily to read the letters page! I appreciate your effort in each issue. I really love to read what others think.

I'm glad somebody enjoys this thing. I'm glad you all like to read these things but sometimes

I'd rather drive nails into my face. These things just take too long to do and I never give myself enough time. It's always "time for bed, but I'll do that letters column real quick before I hit the sack" and then here I am... FIVE HOURS LATER. Sigh. I dig seeing them in print, though.

As a native Pittsburgher who was born the year "Night of the Living Dead" was released, I've always loved the zombie genre. I feel that your book has really elevated the genre to a new level. Keep up the great work!

Take care,
Jeff Moreci

Thanks for the kind words, Jeff. The check is in the mail.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

Let me first start off like so many before me by saying that I love The Walking Dead, love it, and this is my first time ever writing to a comic writer, and the love of your book isn't even my full reason for doing so. I have been following TWD in single issues since #19, before that I borrowed the first two trades from a friend and picked up the third after reading one and two WAY too fast. Since then I chomp at the bit each month for the next issue, I just can't help it the book is so good, and I also enjoy reading your letters column (your replies make me laugh out loud sometimes). I have noticed though that your letters column seems to lack one huge thing, female fans! Well, now you will know that you have at least one. I buy the book, not my boyfriend (he just mooches and reads my copy).

I usually don't print letters from girls. I think girls are icky. Actually though, when I'm at cons, it seems we have a lot of female fans. This is really the one book I do that chicks seem to dig. My wife kinda likes the book, I think.

I have been working at a comic book store for almost five years and collecting comics for a bit longer then that, before that I read my older brothers books as a kid. Whenever someone comes to the shop looking for something new I suggest TWD, and this is very strange for me because up until six months ago I was hugely afraid of zombies. Seriously, it was my one totally irrational fear. We're talking changing the channel when zombie trailers were on TV and not even wanting to touch any books or comics zombie related, everything zombie gave me nightmares. But your book has changed all that, I now have Zombie Fever and I am not giving it up.

You are SUCH a girl. Good thing you actually ARE a girl. Or at least claim to be one.

As a woman reader I have to congratulate you on writing totally believable female characters. Thank you for not making every single woman in TWD a total nut case and pointless when it comes to tough times. I especially admire Andrea, and I'm hoping that Sophia stays on track with her wicked-ass boy friend getting ways. I also like the fact that Andrea takes matters into her own hands and hasn't let the death of her sister or being attacked by Thomas slow her down, it has only made her stronger. Thank you for creating such great role model worthy female comic characters, they are hard to

find in the male centric world of comics. As are female fans, or so I've been told at conventions, but I know that there are more out there then just myself, there has to be, because you and your work deserve it.

Thanks, it really means a lot that you like the female characters. I try to make this book as realistic as I can, aside from the walking dead people, of course.

Thank you, and keep up the good work.

Amey
(honest!)

PS. - I also love Invincible and recommend that whenever someone is looking for something new with tights.

And she likes Invincible too! I was almost convinced this really WAS a girl until RIGHT NOW.

Mr. Kirkman,
First of all, thank you for creating the best damned zombie book I've ever read. Second of all, congrats on maintaining the closest thing image has to a monthly book. It is appreciated after those relatively fruitless Deadworld years of the eighties and early nineties when one was expected to wait a minimum of four-five months between issues. And while I'm thanking, congratulating, and generally kissing ass, let me add that the lack of walking dead annuals, spin-offs, cross-overs, etc make for a much more enjoyable stacked comic set that can be easily accessed in a timely manner... plus, we (i.e. readers, collectors, creators, parents) will all know that issue one-hundred actually means ninety-nine issues of previous continuity have transpired--no more, no less. That being said, I would still enjoy a flashback or two in the regular consecutively numbered series complete with emergency broadcast systems and rescue outposts. I know we've all seen these scenes before, but I'd still love seeing some of these more familiar characters' experiences during those initial shocking moments. So, here's to issue 125 and beyond, Mr. Kirkman. I for one can't wait for the aliens. But, alas, I will. Hopefully, on a continued month-to-month basis.

Still waiting for the war,

Matt Cashel (writer of the now-temporarily defunct paradigm/lover of the obscene--as long as it is tastefully done, of course)

P.S. so how about that hbo series and toyline tie-in?

Matt, Matt, Matt... Image has many monthly books. Noble Causes, Spawn, Girls, Fell, Invincible and many others come out monthly and are usually on time. But thanks for the compliments all the same.

I don't want to do too many flash backs in the book. At first I was going to open every TPB with a flash back, so every six issues the book would have a little glimpse into the past. It was an idea I abandoned really quick. I want to just move forward from here on out.

Just one more thing... approximately... any plans, tentative or otherwise, for maps of the traversed lands. on a related note, how about timelines? Okay, that was two but, and this is no excuse, I'm a big fan of both.

That and shock troopers. Oh, yeah, those future covers are looking sweet.

Once again,
Matt Cashe

I'd like to do some maps and timelines, but as of yet, I just haven't had time. Maybe sometime in the future.

Dear Robert

There is a fascinating albeit grisly science project aspect to Allen's wounding. Will he die and turn into a dead walker? Will he survive? Will his left foot turn?

After his wife's murder, Allen has become an uninteresting dead weight. In other words, a target. Talking about targets, turning the lights on after dark will only be a source of grief for our survivors. It will only attract more roamers, and other less decayed predators with guns.

This time what really prompted this letter is what happened in another publication. In other words, CONGRATULATIONS for winning the Wizard Fan Award in the Favorite Breakout Talent category. TWD is my favorite title and Invincible is a fun read.

Thanks. The little statue is so neat. This was my first award (and let's face it could be my only one) so I'm enjoying the heck out of this thing.

Victor Rosario Fermaint

PD Talking about Invincible, did you like Sky High? I read somewhere that a major studio optioned, Invincible for the Big Screen.

Paramount pictures optioned Invincible. I'm writing the first draft of the screenplay.

PD2 Are you going to Wizard's Texas show?

No. Not this year at least.

Have you seen Romero's The Crazies? Great card-playing gas masked soldiers. Again, looking forward to those post-25.

Matt

That just came out on DVD didn't it? Or was that the other--the vampire movie? Martin? I need to see both of those.

To all at the Walking Dead,
Ever since discovering your book at Comic-Con 2005, I can't stop reading it. Volumes 1, 2 and 3 go with me wherever I go. Since the books didn't show what the original cover arts looked like, I looked them up and eBay and damn! They were so cool, I just had to get every single issue. Tony Moore did a particular great job on Issues 6, 9, 16, 18, and 21. I'm not saying those are the only great ones, I'm just saying they're my favorite. I've asked this on a board I visit and got a fairly good response, but I wanted to know what your (Kirkman) thoughts on this were. What does the butterfly on the issue 21 cover mean to you? Thanks for sharing your talents with the world.
Mike J. Cervantes

It means there are still caterpillars running around somewhere.

Hi Robert Kirkman and the rest of the Walking dead staff:

I just finished issue #21. Another great read. At first, I didn't even notice the little butterfly on the barbed wire fence. (on the cover) How sweet.

So Allen got bit? Oh well, he was chronically depressed anyway.

Amputation? It didn't work out so well for Miguel in Day of the Dead, if you remember.

I have the Zombie survival guide by Max Brooks and unlike most guys who write in, I think its only OK, not terrific. Its entertaining, but nothing greatly original. If you want it, send me a P.O. box #, it's yours, I'm done with it.

I've already got a copy, thanks.

If you(or the fans) want some decent zombie books try The Rising and City of the Dead by Brian Keene, Down the Road by Bowie Ibarra, and Blood Crazy and Stranger by Simon Clark. The last two aren't exactly "zombie" books, but they're similar.

Anyway, thanks again for the great comic. I'm looking forward to the Big Hardcover edition of issues #1-24. I'm sure going to pick it up.

Thanks.
Chad Kanishock

The hardcover will be out soon. Start lifting weights now.

Dear Kirkman,

I've never really written to a comic book before, but I see your one of the few that actually take the time to actually read and answer some of your fans letter, which really impresses me.

First off I want to tell you that after hearing many good things about The Walking Dead, I finally picked it up to read it at issue #18. 4 issues later I have to tell you, that you are very quickly becoming one of my favorite writers. I liked them so much I bit the bullet and spent a decent amount of cash to get all the back issues, and I'm very glad I did!!!

Normally I really don't care for Zombie Comics, but the way you write Walking Dead it just works. You actually make me "feel" for the characters in your book.

My question to you is, besides Walking Dead, what other comics have you written that you are really proud of? I would love to check out some of your other stuff and just wanted to see what you consider some of your best stuff...

Thanks for your time, and keep on writing those bad ass stories.... waiting every damn month now for my next fix hehe....

Ed Sherman

That I'm proud of? Jeez... there's nothing that I'm embarrassed of--but I don't know that

I've done enough work to be particularly proud of one book over another.

I've done a ton of stuff. Battle Pope, SuperPatriot, Tech Jacket, Invincible, Brit, Capes, Cloudfall, Tales of the Realm, Masters of the Universe: Icon's of Evil, Reaper, Jubilee, Epic Illustrated (Sleepwalker), Captain America, Marvel Knights 2009, Marvel Team-Up, Fantastic Four: Foes, Magdalena/Vampirella, Space Ace... that's everything off the top of my head. I'm sure there's something I've forgotten. And there's MORE where THAT came from!

Kirkman and Co,

Just wanted to tell everyone involved that you are doing a great job! I have never been this excited about a series... well... EVER. Every month (or more) that was a job at you Kirkman-I head to my local comic shop (Chris's Comics in Marshfield, MA) and run home to get my latest surprise filled issue. I just finished issue #21 and I just have to comment on the Letter Hacks talk of staying at the prison or roaming aimlessly. I do think you could spend a lot of time at the prison there is just sooo much you can do with it. I could see the group finally leaving after an extreme event takes place (but at the rate bodies are dropping that would be hard to pull off). Ok now that I am done sucking your balls, I have a few questions:

1. Will we ever see and zombie animals? RE has zombie dogs but I am thinking about zombie gorillas, elephants, or even llamas. That would just be strange scene if the group came across a Zoo in their travels.

No zombie animals. Sorry. They just don't exist in this book.

2. Is there an address I could mail an issue and have you sign to me? I don't know if you have been asked this yet so bare with me. I would be willing to pay a fee or whatever but it would just be a great thing to have. Please, for the love of the undead give me an address! Also, please do NOT write the address of an asylum under this question.

I would love to do this, but I don't have time to be receiving and then sending out all the copies of the book I would get. Also, I'd just piss you all off by sending them off late. I'm really bad at finding time to mail stuff--just ask anyone. They ALL know.

Anyways, keep up the great work everyone. Well, until the undead tear through my face like a crack head through a syringe wrapper - make mine Kirkman!

-Andy Cooper

Why's everyone always gotta be baggin' on the crack heads? What'd THEY ever do?

Hey Robert & gang...thanks again for printing my last e-mail. Still gives me a thrill to see my letter in print! I'm prompted to write this time through a preview I saw last night for December comics: Marvel zombies! Written by you with art by Sean Phillips (one of my fave artists). Ties in with the excellent Ultimate FF "zombie" 3-parter, but I guess you know that! Anyway, can't wait for that mini series!

Seems like Tony Moore isn't doing the Walking Dead covers from #26. Sigh, end of yet another era.

I feel the last few issues of TWD are building into something big. Though there's been action, it's kind of taken second place to the prison setting. Kind of like the calm before the storm. I have a feeling ish 25 the brown stuff hits...

Yes, I'm really excited to be working with Sean Phillips on Marvel Zombies. It's going to be a hoot and I recommend you all give it a shot. Although, it's going to be NOTHING like this book.

And before I go, to "celebrate" Romero's Land of The Dead being released over here (England) - which I haven't seen yet, but will do I hope, the BBC are showing his other "Dead" movies on regular TV. Sunday night, Night of the living, tonight Dawn of, & tomorrow night, Day of (which I've only seen once, so look forward to that!).

Couldn't get any better for a zombie fan!

Quick question; do you have an end yet to the series? An actual number where the story wraps up, or do you still intend to keep on going while sales/your interest lasts?

If you guys like the book so much, why do you want it to end? Would you guys be happy if I said it's going to end at issue 50? Would you want it to end at 75? Is it just a matter of KNOWING the book is going to last a certain amount of issues. Like if I said that we were going to go to issue 129, that would just assure you that we had a good long time to go, right? I DON'T have a definite end in sight. I have ideas, but it's a long ways off, NOTHING is set in stone at this point. Just rest assured that I have a plan and will do this book for as long as I can.

I'm sure you've been asked this, but what do you think of "Land of the dead"? I've read mixed reviews. Interestingly enough, one film critic in a national paper gave the movie 3 stars out of 5 (which for a "horror" flick is excellent!)

Anyway, just as I was cutting my comic list, I read about Marvel zombies. Never mind, it'll be worth the financial strain!

Cheers
Jeff

Okay, from now on, anyone who asks me what I thought of Land Of The Dead automatically doesn't get their letter printed. Starting next issue. You've been warned.

They mention something in Wizard about Rick finally losing it. Hasn't he been slowly doing that since he awoke in the hospital? Do me a favor, don't pull a Blue Beetle and kill him. Come on, let Rick live!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

When has Wizard ever been right?

And with that I can finally go to bed. No more letters for me folks, I'm all finished. Woo hoo!

See you here next month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
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OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Well, here we are at the landmark issue 25. We're not really doing one of those high-priced extra-sized anniversary issues... it just didn't feel right to me. So this is just another issue in a long line of issues, with many more to come. Who knows, maybe we'll do something special for issue 50. We'll see.

I'd like to take the time to thank all of you for sticking with the book this long and to those of you that came in late... I want to say thanks for giving the book a shot and then sticking with it after that. I really do appreciate you folks giving me the chance to continue telling my story. I think we've got some cool stuff in store for you all and it's only going to get better from here. Charlie and Cliff get better with every issue and there already didn't seem to be any room for improvement... so if I could just step up my game a little, I think we'd have a perfect book on our hands. I hope you'll all stick around for 5000 more issues.

In other news, if any of you out there like this book... and also like Marvel super-heroes... you might want to give MARVEL ZOMBIES a shot. I'm writing it and the art is by the super-talented SEAN PHILIPS who's doing a real bang-up job on the series. By now the second issue is probably out, so be on the lookout for it.

Also, I'd like to welcome aboard our new cover art team of Charlie Adlard and Cliff Rathburn. I don't know if you guys know who they are. Charlie is an industry pro from way back who's credits include X-Files, Astronauts in Trouble, The Establishment, Savage (from 2000 A.D.) and a little known creator-owned book THE WALKING DEAD. He'll be handling the pencils and inks. Coloring the covers is the multi-talented Cliff Rathburn who did both pencils and inks on Brit: Red White Black and Blue as well as Fantastic Four: Foes and Reaper. He's also inking a few issues of Invincible over Ryan Ottley's pencils for me as well as gray-toning a the same little

known creator-owned book Charlie draws... they I already know they'll work well together. Let's give them a warm Walking Dead welcome.

Now, without further ado... let's answer some damn mail.

Robert, Charlie and the rest of the Walking Dead gang,

I have been a fan of the book since issue 4, and continue to maintain that it is one of a handful of inventive, and high quality zombie themed properties out of the plethora of zombie movies, comics, and books. I must say though, the current storyline is languishing. The energy and quality that is so abundant in the first 10 issues has slowly been eroding, and now that the characters seem to be locked into some kind of soap opera. I completely understand, or at least I think I do, the current prison story arc and how you are focusing on the unraveling of the group. I feel, though, that somewhere around the time Tyreese emerged from the gym after his battle with the zombie hordes, my interest in the characters took a nosedive. I don't feel that any of them have really progressed for at least the last 4 issues. Walking Dead is a story of survivors trying to cope, and I get the fact that right now they are hiding out, and trying to make a new life apart from the zombies outside the compound. I also understand that change is coming, and the ending of issue #22 brings things to a turning point. I'm not asking for more zombies, or aliens, or smart zombies, like so many others that contribute to this letters column. What I am asking for is some better character development so I actually care what happens to these guys again.

First, I should point out that not much time has passed in these last few issues, there's only so much character development you can do in a small

amount of time. Also,

the soap opera stuff of the past few issues was a necessary step in where I'm going with this book. It's not the way the book is going to be from here on out. I quite enjoyed it, but for some it seems, it's going to have to be a necessary evil. I think you'll really enjoy what I have coming up.

It would also help if I could tell the difference between them. Charlie Adlard, by all accounts, walked into a very hot book and was asked to fill some very large shoes. His work has definitely progressed since his tenure began, and the Rick-Tyreese fight of issue #22 really showcases his talent. It seems he has really gotten the action down. It is unfortunate then that in the more static sequences earlier in the issue, I found it hard to differentiate between Rick and Herschel, as well as Carol and Andrea, whose main difference seems to be a few freckles. It is nice that Andrea was given a scar to help make her stand out, and that Andrea...err...Carol is now seemingly dead. This will no doubt help in the identifying process.

I think it's a shame that this some readers blame Charlie for their inability to tell the characters apart. Charlie coming on the book coincided with a large influx of new characters and THAT'S why it's harder now. Also, the fact that the book is black and white doesn't help. The characters do call each other by name a lot but really, when you get down to it... their faces are ALL very different. Carol and Andrea for instance... have ALWAYS look VASTLY different.

I know this must read like hate mail, but please take it as criticism from a fan. C'mon guys let's get back on the ball.

Jonathan Bullock

I welcome the criticism... this is much more fun than saying "glad you liked the book, thanks for the letter" for the millionth time. Also, letters like this lead to things like the character list in the back of the book and my desire to hang myself. You're really doing us all a public service.

Kirkzilla and CO.,

Just got finished reading issue #22, awesome cliffhanger. I love this comic because of the cliffhangers, and the zombie shit is pretty cool too. I was reading the letters and noticed someone commented on an annual or special of some type. I think this would be a great idea if used in a certain way. I would like to see the events that took place with Morgan and Duane after they left the group. I see other people want to see stories from other events and locations around the world. I think this would not be as great an idea as everyone thinks, the less we know the better. Just my opinion. Couple

of notes and question:

Just bought the Land of the Dead Uncut DVD, movie is the bomb shit! I noticed on the cover, bottom left next to Big Daddy zombie, the zombie known as Bub from Day of the Dead. Cool little nugget for anyone that did not notice this. Although I did not notice a cameo in the movie by him.

That is actually Simon Pegg who has a small cameo in that make-up in the movie. He AND Edgar Write are on that cover I believe... multiple times.

Will you ever be appearing in the Boston, MA area for a signing? EVER? SOON? PLEASE? DOUCHE!

Been there done that. Where were you December of 2004? I signed at Comicopia and did a local show hosted by Larry from Larry's comics.

Just bought the new Dane Cook CD. Check it out Cook is a funny bastard. Now I'm just looking for anything to write about...so let me ask a weird question...Do you think if I had the interior of my ball sack laced with cotton, it would no longer hurt when being kick in the junk? Just a question that has been in my brain for a while now. And yes I do FREQUENTLY find myself in the position of having the berries bashed. And the pointless rant ends.

Anyways, keep up the great work everyone involved. Peace-

Andy Cooper

Cotton doesn't do SHIT. Trust me... it STILL hurts.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,
This is my third letter to you guys and I am afraid it is more of the same. I just finished WD#22 and I am still loving this series. I got onboard with issue #1 and I am still enjoying the ride. You guys are doing a hell of a job. Keep it up!

I must admit I write this letter with ulterior motives as well. I just read from Marvel that you are writing the mini series Marvel Zombies due out in December. They say that it is a spin off of the Crossover story line from Ultimate Fantastic Four. What can you tell us, or at least just me, about this? I really enjoyed that story line and the idea of you writing a Marvel Zombies story is AWESOME!!!! I can't wait!!!

It's about the Marvel heroes as ZOMBIES. It's wacky and gory and crazy and action-packed. I dig it and it's in stores now.

Michael Mora

P.S. In my last two letters I told you that my

friend was a "stupid jerk" for not reading *The Walking Dead*. Well guess what? He's still a stupid jerk who has not picked up an issue of this series. So in light of this could you print in *Letter Hacks*, "Hey Terrence you're a stupid jerk for not reading our comic!" or something of that nature. It would be a dream come true. Thanks.

Hey, Terrence you're a stupid jerk for not reading our comic!!

Carol committed suicide--wasn't expecting that one! You might want to update the who's who--she is still alive on there! Wanted to let you know that there is a *Walking Dead* zombie novel on ebay right now by a Guy N. Smith from 1984. Did you know about this? I look forward to your zombie marvel limited series---they couldn't do better for the writer! Here is a question that I haven't noticed, if you did do a mini series on HBO, would you pull a Stan Lee and cameo in it? That would be cool. How much longer on the hardback collection? Issue #0---set it before the outbreak maybe? I Also cannot wait for the team-up with Spider-man and Invincible---very smart and unexpected team-ups yet! Another question, how come the survivors are not carrying around the heavy firepower from the armory or use the walkies to keep in touch? Anyway, thanks for the great job and keep'em dead!!!!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

As evidenced in this very issue, our heroes are just now to the point where they can catalogue the items in the armory. I'm sure they'll find a good use for all that stuff VERY soon.

Dear Kirkman,

First of all, congrats on *Ultimate X-Men*! You changed my mind about it. I'll definitely check it out. Also, I have been using the picture of zombie Spider-Man in classic pose for some time now. *Marvel Zombies* looks great. And man, *Piers* always has me beat. It's all I can do to come up with five questions. He had like fifteen.

Yeah, but all of Piers' questions are stupid.

Before the questions, I wanted to warn everyone about a movie named *Zombiez*. Yeah ok, the title should have warned me, but I tried it anyways. Holy crap what a terrible movie. It was actually hard to tell who was a zombie and who wasn't. They walked normal sometimes, talked very well, used sickles (of all things), only ate intestines/cheap sausage, and hid, threw rocks, and laughed. There is a scene where a guy scares off a hoard by wildly shouting and waving a meat cleaver...

Avoid it like the zombie plague.

Ok questions:

1. *Piers* had a good idea. Any chance of an all zombie issue? You could even subtitle their moans. No wait, scratch that last part.

Yeah...

THAT sounds like a *Piers* question/suggestion. All zombie issue... right.

2. Okay, so do you think Miguel (*Day of the Dead*) would have lived, had he not thrown himself to the zombies?

Who knows... I guess the jury is STILL out on the whole amputation saving a zombie bite victim thing...

3. Assuming that at some point they will leave the prison, what are some other locations you have considered? Shopping mall? I thought the gated community might work out, until the snow melted. Spooky roller disco?

I really can't answer this... I don't want to give anything away.

4. We've been loyal long enough, how about that contest to be a TWD zombie?

Too complicated.

5. Did you ever join Zombiearmy.com? If so, did you ever get your free stuff? F'n *Zombiearmy*...

Man... if I did, I can't remember.

6. What is your writing time like? That is, what kind of routines/rituals do you go through when you sit down to write? Not like praying to Pittsburgh five times a day, but like putting on a Kiss album or writing in between commercials of *Lost*. How does the Kirkman do it?

Well, it certainly has NOTHING to do with any KISS albums (sorry Kiss fans--it's just before my time). I usually listen to music while I write... right now I'm rocking out to some very mellow Neil Young. I'm totally relaxed. I almost pooped my pants just a minute ago... it's THAT relaxing.

Well, like I've said before, you need to work on being more controversial. The stuff is still great, but I haven't felt a WTF moment for a while. No cows though. Oh, and zombie Sentry looks awesome. And *Marvel Zombies* is a good use of that internet derogatory term. Can't wait. Till the zombies start hiding behind rocks, throwing their voice to lure in their victim just to toss a small stone at their head to annoy them,

Your loyal fan,
Chris Pitts

Shit... have you read the script for issue 26? I need to take out that whole throwing their voices scene.

Mr. Kirkman,

I love me those zombie films. One of my favourite stories currently collecting dust on my cheap ass IKEA shelves is Dan Simmons' *'This Year's Class Picture'*. I've even written a few zombie tales my own good self, which have been met without calls for lynchings.

You going to tell me how your story involves a

prison... but that it's okay that mine does too? I get that a lot.

But by some miracle, I had never heard of your comic THE WALKING DEAD. Until I saw Blair Butler--head writer on X-PLAY--praise you to the heavens on G4's 'Attack of the Show'. So today I went out and found a copy--WALKING DEAD #22.

Amazing. Blair was right--this is the stuff. But before I fully commit to your book, are all your fans as talented, funny and beautiful as Blair Butler? Because if so, then I'll fit in just fine! HA HA HA (choke, gasp, gurgling scream as hands reach through the walls...)

Best,
Sean Twist

Man... I never saw that segment of Attack of the Show. I always miss the cool stuff.

Kirkman,

You guys still have the best ongoing book on the shelf. Now that my friend Katie got me reading Invincible, you're the only other writer besides BKV that I read more 'n one title from. (I've trimmed my pull list to get more tattoo money.) Issue 22 was solid, but.... I know that these characters are the heart of the story and all, but how 'bout some zombie action? I better see some running and screaming and innards before long. After Rick and Tyreese get through beating the shite outta each other, that is.

I'm sorry, I lost you at "tattoo money." You'd be MUCH better off buying more comics. I don't even know if I can read the rest of your letter.

I read somewhere that you're, like, 26 years old. I'm 23 myself and I would like to hear your thoughts on the future of comics as a young person in the industry. I mean, I don't know how it is out there in other towns, but at my comic store, I'm like the young guy (excluding the few kids underfoot buying gaming cards). I know there have to be some young readers out there, and I know there are a few artists and the like who are young 'uns but mostly I just see people in their thirties and up when I'm in line for my holds. What do you think about where comics are headed?

There's plenty of life left in this industry to be sure. Saying anything more than that in this response would keep me from having room to print ANY letters. I'm sure I've said something more in-depth on the internet... you've got one of those internet things right?

Thanks in advance for printing this 'cause I'm not creatively vulgar enough for Bendis. Keep up the good work. Same to Charlie, Cliff, Rus and Tony.

Van Barnett

Thanks for the letter. You're just creatively vulgar enough for me.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

A few weeks ago I broke my silence, so to speak, as a comicbook fan and for the first time in all my twenty odd years of reading comics, wrote a letter to a comicbook writer/creator. I won't tell you who it was, so you can't be jealous, but I would like to think you're in good company. I love The Walking Dead. I don't care what anyone else has said, yours is the first zombie comic book that got it right! I'm sure you've heard that before, but I need to say it too. Feel good about yourself, sir. You're a wonderful, talented individual and I appreciate all the hours of entertainment you've provided for me and so many others. So thanks, dude.

I got a kick out of reading issue 22's letters section, or a couple pages of it anyway, and finding out that I'm not the only one who saves my current issue of The Walking Dead for last when I have a stack of books to read. I have to save it for last, yes, I have to savor it--it's just that good to me. I also tend to eat my meals more slowly than my friends do but that's beside the point I suppose. Like you said about reading your favorite books first, if I did that, I would probably have a stack of unread books too. Shit, I have a stack of books I'll probably never get to as it is but those were all bought years and years ago when my tastes were different. You tell a great story and it's hard for me to sit still for a month after reading the current issue. I had a ball reading the early issues since I had to go back and buy up back issues--I still don't have them all but I bought the first trade so I haven't missed anything. I read Days Gone Bye in one sitting and was hooked instantly and I needed more immediately. I went out and bought what I could find, hell I even went on eBay to get issue 7 and I ordered a bunch from online stores too but after a couple of weeks I had fifteen issues to read. Fifteen issues! IN A ROW! Even then, I stopped myself in the middle to savor this book so I didn't speed through it and find myself wanting too soon. I probably would have written in earlier, after reading other fan letters, but I was too keen on reading the next issue to stop and read the letters section. Anyway, enough about that.

Good job. I can't say anything bad about The Walking Dead. In fact, I can only point out things I liked a lot in particular. "Ruh.", as a sentence, as a word, as a zombie utterance. I don't know why but I just like it. It's a good zombie word. "A zombie would say that.", I said to myself, upon reading it way back when. You're going to read this and then write Ruh. as a reply in the letters column, I can just see that happening. And then I'll be crushed because it'll be like we weren't really talking but I'll laugh anyway and--er, I'm sorry. It's late and I'm hopped up on energy drinks. Oh yes, before I zap ahead, I just wanted to say that I absolutely

love the cover art of issue 1. It's brilliant. Tony scored huge there. Tell Tony he rocks for me. Er, please? Since I've probably tripped all the "insane fan alarms" in your head just now I won't take too much more of your time. Michonne's survival method, the chained "neutered" zombies and sword (silent weapon), that was ingenious. How the fuck did you think of that?! I also like how you're exploring the fact that everyone who dies also turns, regardless of how they died (headshots/braining being the exceptions). I don't think I've seen that explored too much just like the idea of amputation to avoid infection was never really fleshed out (sorry!) in Day Of The Dead since that particular character died shortly afterward. I've seen a few zombie movies, all of the Romero ones of course, but not a great many more so maybe I'm just uninformed in that sense.

Quick statements: I just read your interview with Suicide Girls guy Daniel Robert Epstein--good stuff and, I knew they were Thomas' remains.

Now, the dreaded fan questions (which may or may not have already been asked and answered--I'm so lame):

1. What zombie movies, aside from Romero's, would you recommend to me? I've seen Dead Alive, The Evil Dead movies, 28 Days Later, The Dawn Of The Dead remake, Shaun Of The Dead and the Resident Evil movies...

The Night of the Living Dead 1990 remake is a must. As is Lucio Fulci's "ZOMBIE" (but you can skip the sequels). UNDEAD is a brilliantly fun zombie flick. CEMETARY MAN is good. There's more but I'm having trouble coming up with them off the top of my head right now.

2. What'd you think about MTU making an appearance in the TV spot (haven't seen the movie yet) for The 40 Year Old Virgin?

It's in the movie too. Steve Carrel thinks MTU is funny... it's not just in the script, he's actually READING the book and thinks it's funny. I'm totally famous.

3. Do you ever write back to your fans? I mean, even just to send them their letters back with corrected grammar and spelling? I know you've thought about it!

I'm too busy for that nonsense. Half the time I don't even READ the letters until it's time to put the column together.

4. Ever find yourself wishing that fans still had to actually handwrite letters and send them through snail mail or are you glad for email making things that much easier?

Email is a godsend. I wouldn't print ANYTHING if I had to retype it myself... which is why I don't print snail mail letters.

5. Marvel Zombies, dream job? I saw you getting crap in the letters of MTU's early

issues for a rotted corpse... A big "Fuck you" to the naysayers maybe?

That's as good an explanation as any.

6. Did you read any of the Zombie World stuff from Dark Horse? Love it, hate it? I thought the Eat Your Heart Out one-shot by Kelly Jones was especially creepy myself.

That was good and Winter's Dregs was good. The rest... not so much... but those two were downright amazing.

7. Did you read Romero's comic, Toe Tags from DC? Love it, hate it?

Romero is the master... no doubt. Toe Tags... must have been an off day.

8. Am I in trouble for not underlining all the comic book titles I'm mentioning? Come to think of it, am I in trouble for naming other publishers?! Eek... Don't sic Erik Larsen on me!!

I'm sorry, you've brought this upon yourself.

Okay, I'm done pestering you. Thank you once again for The Walking Dead and I hope you go way past seventy-five issues. My heartfelt thanks go out to Charlie Adlard and Cliff Rathbun as well, you guys rock too! I would say more but I'll save it for another letter... I tend to ramble on about artwork. Just keep doing what you're doing fellas, I love it!

Will T.

Ruh.

Kirk,

Just wanted to follow up to my last letter BEFORE I get slaughtered for my mistake. I stated that on the cover of the Land of the Dead DVD had Bud from Day in the bottom left corner. I am wrong, I just watched the Simon Pegg video and realized that it was him in costume. Sorry Simon but you look just like the Budman.

Andy Cooper

Sorry, you've already been scolded for the offense. I think the similarities in make-up are a coincidence.

First letter to a comic blah blah love your work blah etc. Yours is one of only 3 comics I read, the other 2 being "Y the last man" and "Fables". And of course, I always save your book for last, blah blah...

I watched Undeard recently, and I have to agree with you that it was pretty good, except for two little things... first and foremost, Zombie FISH?! what the hell...? secondly, when they're all dashing up the stairs to the bathroom, the subtitles say "Zombie moaning", but I

clearly heard one of the ugly buggers moaning "Join Us...". Creepy. Other than that, it has everything a good zombie movie needs. A beauty queen, a pregnant lady, an inept cop, and of course a

hillbilly that claims to have been abducted by aliens.

By the way, did I mention ZOMBIE FISH?!

It is a NEAR PERFECT movie isn't it? It's it got ALIENS too!!

Anyways, I had the thought the other day that, since Andrew believed that he started this plague, there's gotta be other people out there with survivor guilt as well. I'm just imagining some stupid Goth or Satanist claiming responsibility for this and trying to threaten the government or some such crap.

Yeah, stupid Goth Satanists....

I don't presume to give you demands, or even mere suggestions, but you gotta admit, the mental picture is satisfying. "Go forth, my minions, and slay my oppressors! Hey, I said go FORTH! What are you...? AAAUGH!"

Damn I'm twisted, but not as much as you buggers. here's to many years of zombie havoc, and issue 600!

Cheers,
Russ

Issue 600?! FEH... I want to get to issue 1000... and we're going to make it there too, right Charlie?!

Of course, I've never written to a comic before.

"The Walking Dead #23: Fist Fight!" Yay! The ubiquitous prison-movie punch-up! Fantastic! But before we get to that, I've got to say that #22 was a great issue. A slightly quieter episode, with lots of checking up on our survivors (I particularly like how you've been developing Axel as a more sympathetic, thoughtful character), and not one, but two big splash page cliffhangers! Yikes! Top notch stuff, as per usual.

All that said, I'm not sure what was going on on page 21 with Rick putting his finger in Tyreese's ear. Is that some kind of Crocodile Hunter-style calming technique he learned during police training?

I don't want Charlie coming round to punch me in the face; the art was great as ever, it was just a weird panel. Please don't hit me!

Kelvin Green

That's what's called a "TANGENT" in the comic world. Rick's not putting his finger in Tyreese' ear... it just looks like his is, on

**accident,
because of the way it was drawn.**

I thought it was funny.

Dear Letter Hacks

Pardon me for asking, but will WD40 be the all action engine overhaul issue we've all been longing for? Sorry, been a long, hard, difficult week!

Cheers,
Jeff

For you man--I'll make sure that happens!!

Dear TWD,
Can't wait to see who kicks who's butt (like 1 handed Rick stands a chance). I'm also hoping for a very slow "turn" of Allen.
Any new visitors coming soon?

Movies: Just saw Dead and Breakfast and Day of the Dead 2: Contagium.

Dead and Breakfast is hilarious. It's as good as Shaun of the Dead except not all the zombies are slow and stupid, but the little tribute to Thriller ("We're coming to kill ya, we're comin' to kill ya") was hilarious.

Day of the Dead 2 was better than I expected. I ended up liking it. In some parts the acting was bad enough to ruin the suspension of disbelief, but the story was written well enough to pull you back.

I'd love to see an animated zombie series like TWD. I think I've already mentioned that. Are there any other horror-types you enjoy (vampires, werewolves, maniacs, ghosts, etc.)?

Pretty much all of them really.

I think horror films are the best medium for social commentary. Comedy seems to be the second best. I believe it's because both can take a social situation and present in an extreme and entertain at the same time. Comments?

Is Charlie ever gonna get a crack at a cover? I just think Tony needs to be completely phased out (just kidding).

Starting with this issue, it's Charlie on covers full-time. REJOICE!

Here's to hoping that the TWD television is picked up by the time #100 hits the stands (lifting a bottle of Killian's).

HERE, HERE!

Merl Key
Columbus, IN.

PS- In Indiana we don't even acknowledge Buckeyes (people from Ohio), so I guess that puts them even lower than Kentuckians, but I've heard people in Michigan make fun of Hoosiers. I

wonder which states make fun of the others.

That would be Montana... the arrogant FUCKS.

Kirkman and friends:

Neil Strangeate's wife (Mrs. Strangeate) saw the cover of ish #22 and exclaimed "Omigod, it looks like a romance comic book for girls!" I told her she was exactly right. I summed it up:

"All this fucking-and-fighting soap opera drama is going down among this group of people, who just happen to be trapped in a big abandoned prison, which is constantly surrounded by hordes of moaning zombies."

I love flesh-eating hijinx and zombie shenanigans just as much as anybody, but what keeps me thinkin' about a WD ish for weeks after I've read it is the human drama. (And the artwork.) Ish 22, which featured absolutely no zombie action at all, barely even had zombies in it - just two panels featuring those creepy fence-huggers - was a stand-out, as far as drama, melodrama, whatever you wanta call it, is concerned. Inspector Leechcraft calls it "soap opera for boys." And we dig it the most.

Speaking of the Inspector, last week he was talkin' about TWD w/ his comic book guy over in Tulsa, and his guy told him, "O yeah, *everybody's* into that shit." Leechcraft sed the way his guy emphasized, "everybody," it made it sound like TWD was porn.

Speaking of porn, I can't wait for your fence-huggers to get ass-raped by the aliens in #100. Thanx again, dudes.

The Right Revered Potere O. Occulto III

Right on... or something.

Oh, Great Bearded One,

Have time to kill, and decided to ask a few silly questions regarding the series and whatnot. First let me thank you. We briefly chatted at Wizard World Chicago, and you were one of the nicest guys. You seem to love the medium and not just use it for a movie, television, video game, etc stepping stone. Cheers for that.

On to the silly questions:

1. Will we ever see zombies in costumes? Like a guy that had that crappy dress-as-a-chicken to give out coupons job.

That's the one thing I really HATE about Romero movies... those zombies take me out of the story. I mean... if everyone turned into zombies overnight, the percentage of cheerleaders, clowns and what not would be SO SMALL that we'd never see them... yet he ALWAYS focuses on those zombies.

2. Will there be zombie animals? Zombie porcupines?

No animals... that's a rule.

3. What's up with all of the folks complaining about the WD HC cost on your board? Slap those bitches

into line! These are the same folks'll shell out money for a variant, but won't buy this quality collection.

\$100 is a lot of money for a book, I understand their complaints. But it's a HUGE book and costs a lot. I hope people don't think I'm actually making a mint of the thing... I'm not.

4. Will we ever see a zombie Wal-Mart in WD? (see TM's sketchbook)

Dale and Andrea DID talk about going to a Wal-Mart or something...

5. I really want a sketch that can only be made by the great Tony Moore. George W. Bush riding the bomb aia Dr. Strangelove. What sexual favors did you offer Tony to get 'em to do the first few issues of WD?

Nothing I don't already regret, that's for sure. That man is hung like a can of Pringles.

6. Please don't ever, ever reveal what made the zombies. Please?

Not planning on it.

7. Regarding Invincible, can beards grow in space?

That's where they grow BEST!

8. What are your thoughts regarding your own work after it sees print? Do you not view it? - Woody Allen, Or go over it again to see what you've missed and may include in the future?

Just by the nature of this (and Invincible) being a continuing series I have to from time to time sit down and read every issue. That way I can make sure everything lives. I'm not sitting around reading my stuff because I enjoy it but I'm certainly not one of those people who can't view their own work.

Thanks, Robert. WD and Invincible are two of the best character-driven books out on the market. I'm turning more and more people on to them every day. But as I said before - the good dialogue, round characters, and writing really sells the books. I just push it in front of people.

**A fan and a pusher.
Andrew Rosenbarger**

Round characters? I just write what I KNOW!

And that'll do it for this letters column. I'll see you

LETTER HACKS

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Welcome to Walking Dead 26. Big stuff is on the horizon, folks. The next few issues will set the stage for the next couple years of this book. Big, BIG stuff... so pay attention.

Charlie and Cliff are doing a bang-up job on interiors and now covers as well. Looking sharp, fellas. Just wanted to get them a shout out. Young mister Rathburn is also doing a great job on back covers, which he'll be handling for the next bit of issues at least.

Now, lets answer some mail.

Hey Kirkman,

Merl Key and I both shop at Comic Cave in Columbus. He's gotten like four letters printed in Walking Dead so far; I only have one. Therefore, in a pathetic attempt to try to make up some ground on his record, I am going to send you two letters this time around. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but you gotta give me credit for the originality. It's better than the typical "OMG when is Rick gonna die, [insert lame joke about Cho's Zombie King here]" kind of letter. If you don't have room to print both, feel free to substitute one of mine for Merl's. BRB.

--Sam Kirkland

I can't believe I'm printing this.

Hi again Kirkman,

I'm still loving the book! #23 was amazing as usual. Very brutal. You'll also be pleased to know that I ordered the HC even though I have most of the issues and TPBs already. I can't wait for the Omnibus.

I gotta give a shout-out to Mike at Comic Cave for forcing me to buy the first WD TPB. Usually I can resist his pleas for me to buy something, but on that life-changing day I couldn't. Thanks Mike!

Really loving Invincible; that MTU issue was superb. And to all you readers out there: be sure to check out my reviews at HeroRealm.com (shameless plug!). Our Best of 2005 column in 'Lowdown &

Dirty' should be up over the holidays, and I have a sneaking suspicion that a Kirkman book will be there.

And I almost forgot: someone the other day actually mistook my name for "Kirkman" and I had to tell them, "no, it's not like the superhero. It's KirkLAND, like the country."

That was a joke, BTW. Kirkland is still a much better name.

Don't ever stop writing this book!

--Sam Kirkland

I beg to differ. Kirkland always sounded funny to me growing up. When people would mistake my last name for "Kirkland" I would think: "is that a real name?" So in closing... you are the one with the lame name. Mine is totally sweet.

Dear Kirkman,

Now normally I complain about issue long fights (Bendis, Liefeld, etc), but issue 23 rocked. Very much like a real fight, ending with both combatants on the ground, exhausted and hurt. When I got the issue, I turned right to the letter's column and saw the last page of the book. It looks like (if you didn't see the preceding page) Rick shot himself in the head. Oh, and thanks for killing Allen.

1. Are you the one that comes up with the words representing sounds? WHUD! WRAMM! And my favorite, THOOM! Those are great.

I come up with them, but most of them are old comic book stand-bys... it's not like I invented them. Although, I think I'm the only person to ever use "Brakka-rakka-thakka-dakka-doom!" Which was over in Invincible or Brit. I like sound effects.

2. Do you think that Dr Logan and Bub are still out there together somewhere?

Different universe... and I don't own those

guys. Dead Dog Comics is doing a Day of the Dead book with BUB in it. So if you're curious as to what's going on with that guy--give it a look.

3. When will we see a city again? That's the best stuff. Abandoned military equipment, papers blowing through the streets declaring "The Dead Walk!", and all that delicious carnage you want to see in a zombie film.

I too am anxious to get back to a city with the story... so we'll see one sooner or later.

4. OK, besides Romero's stuff, what are some of your favorite Zombie films? Ever see Plague of the Zombies? Did you hate Resident Evil 2 too?

I'm way to smitten with Mila Jovovich to ever hate anything she was in. Was Resident Evil 2 silly? Maybe a little bit... but I loved every minute of it. Never seen Plague of the Zombies. As far as other non-Romero zombie flicks... you've all got to go find a copy of "STACY" it's an Asian zombie movie that is about the most bizarre zombie flick I've ever seen. Not great, actually, not even good, but it's gory as all heck and it's just bizarre. I should probably publicly thank Mark Englert for turning me on to that... and for turning me on in general.

5. Where are all the themed zombies? Who know, the clowns, bikers, etc? Lately it's just slightly obscured or shade-like figures in the background. Another reason to get out of the prison. Or, let zombies in...

Personally I always hated the clown, Santa, cheerleader zombies in all the Romero flicks. I mean, they'd be there, sure... but what are the odds? If everyone in my neighborhood suddenly turned into zombies and starting walking out of their houses... they'd be in normal every day clothes, at least 95% of them would be. The other 5% would be naked. Like me.

So the Invincible and Spidey team-up in MTU was great! I'd write to that book, but you aren't printing letters in it... I can't freakin wait until Marvel Zombies. I think I said something about it in another letter, but I can't remember those things. Then they get printed late and I'm askin about Land of the Dead or something after you've talked about it over and over. I can't complain though, these issues are coming out quick again. Thanks for killing Allen. Didn't even give that guy a chance to get his zombie close-up. Good job!

THOOM!
Chris Pitts

Glad you're digging this stuff, Chris.

Yo, Kirkman,

Just got issue 23 today. It was great, but not the best thus far I have to say. Almost every issue

until now has been better than the one before it, but I have to say 22 topped the all out rick/tyreese brawl. The issue was still brilliant, just not more brilliant than the one before it.

I also noticed the two page spread formed by the last page of 22 and the first page of 23. It was a great touch by Kirkman (I assume it was his idea) and an even better job on the art by Charlie and Cliff. It's kinda nice to think it will be a straight up two page spread with no covers or letter pages or anything in between when the trade comes out, but I also like that you need to buy both singles to see the whole image.

It was my idea, but it's only fair to point out that I got it from Erik Larsen. He did it in-between Savage Dragon 30 and 31. I think he was the first to ever do that.

On another note, thank you for killing Allen (even after you said not to count him out just yet last issue-- you bastard!). I was hoping you would make that move, because if he lived, the characters would assume that cutting off his leg healed him, and go around cutting off limbs every time they got bit. This would give them an easy way out if they got bitten, and almost no one would die of zombie bites, which could get boring.

And Charlie, I especially liked the panel where Rick falls over the railing in the prison and Tyreese just misses grabbing him. This was the best panel in the issue in my opinion. It was really dramatic and very realistic. Let's not forget the rest of the team either-- Cliff is doing an amazing job, as usual (where do you find these guys, Kirkman?), and good ol' Rus really makes the word bubbles pop off the page.

I find them the same place everyone else finds them. The bus station.

Now for questions. I know you love those.

1. Rick is gonna be okay, right? At least physically if not mentally? I mean, his hand is already beat to crap, give him a break.

I might.

2. Why the hell was Glenn just standing there the whole issue telling them to stop but not doing anything about it?

He's a little guy--he's not about to get in-between them. He doesn't want to get his ass handed to him in front of his girl. Who does?

3. I know, I know. The covers represent an idea, not what actually happens. still, it bugs me that you showed Tyreese beat up on the cover when Rick was the one who really got his ass whooped. Why no Rick on the cover?

Rick is on all the covers, just about. And he was pretty big on the cover to 24. So if he had been on the cover to 23 also, it would have looked weird. I'm keeping Rick off covers for a while.

4. Alright, it's long enough already. When is the freakin' baby gonna be born?

Lori is six or seven months pregnant right now (I'd have to look in the issue to be sure). So we're two or three months off, book time, not real time. It will be SOON, that's all I'll say.

5. Will we ever find out who Michonne was talking to in 21?

Of course.

6. Why do the characters seem to be ignoring the mass zombie problem? They already have a good system to kill them- if they just killed ten a day or something they would be okay.

It's been discussed in the book, cleaning off the fence and such. It'll be easier now that they have the suits. They've been busy. Give them time.

7. Why is Patricia getting it so easy? Rick has punished all the other wrongdoers severely. Is it because she's a girl?

It's more because there isn't really a point. What could you possibly do to punish these people?

Okay, I'm done now. Thanks for putting out a great comic every month (I give you credit for trying) and keeping me going back to the comic shop for more. Long after the aliens hit the scene, I'll be kissing your ass in letters like this.

Jackson Buckley

Man, it's going to be totally cool when there're aliens in this book. I've been doing all kinds of research.

Dear Robert Kirkman and amazing others involved in this comic,

All I can say after reading these past issues 21, 23 and 24 is WOW and SEXY!! I think that they have been the best comics I have ever read. I do have a few questions so here they are:

1. How many times have Glenn and Maggie well, done it in the past 10 issues? (joking but you can answer)

Hell, I can't keep track. I hope they're being CAREFUL.

2. What is this whole thing with Michonne and Tyreese. They knew each other before? Are their names rhyming on purpose?

Their names don't rhyme. Michonne is pronounced "ME-SHAWN" and Tyreese is pronounced "TY-REESE." They didn't know each other before. Michonne knew who he WAS, but didn't know him.

3. Is Lori gonna have that goddamn baby yet?

Soon.

4. Who's baby is it? Can it be a zombie baby?

I guess it COULD be. You'll just have to read the book.

5. When will there be another new character coming in?

Next issue. A few of them.

Those are my questions. Now for my compliments. This comic is so fricking amazing. I just can never and never want to put them down. They were the first comic books I've ever read and wow, the best ever. I am a die-hard zombie fan and it's another thing to add to my collection.

Thanks!!!

P.S. Please print this!!! It's my first time ever writing!!

Sign your name next time!

Dear Robert

RE: Issue #23

Jesus Fuck. Even by TWD standards, that shook things up. Rarely does a comic leave you feeling slightly out of breath, but the pace of this one left me exhausted.

Not as knackered as Rick, though. He's not a well guy.

Can't wait for the next one. Fortnight, you say? Great.

Every other bugger is plugging their favorite comics shop, so here's a mention for Gosh! in London, where this week one of the staff, when asked what was out, kept plugging 'a great issue of The Walking Dead'.

He wasn't wrong.

Regards,
Mark Clapham

Tell everyone at GOSH! I said thanks.

Hi, Kirkman, just wanted to vent a little.

After the angry words come out I'll stop hating everyone and think of puppies and kitties again.

1. Jake Reedy, what the hell do you mean that the ZOMBIES in 28 Days Later weren't zombies? Webster says that a zombie, in addition to the couple of definitions Chris Pitt wrote in issue 23, is "one who looks or behaves like an automaton." For the record, it's also "a tall drink made of various rums, liqueur, and fruit juice." If you want to know how to make one, pick up the latest release of Night of the Living Dead on DVD, the one with the original black and white version (preferred) AND the relatively decent color version. It has a commentary track by Mike Nelson (from Mystery Science Theater 3000), which is hilarious. Anyway, that first definition clearly proves that the infected in 28

Days are zombies, unless you don't know what an automaton is. Look that up yourself. 28 Days was a very

innovative ZOMBIE movie, and it kicked ass for bringing new ideas to the table. It's people like you that probably think Dead Alive sucks, too. God, you make me need a cigarette, and I just quit smoking. That's better. Sweet, sweet cancery death... Anyway, yeah, Webster also said "Whatchoo talkin' bout, Willis?" I'd listen to him, if I were you.

I think he just meant they weren't traditional Romero zombies.

2. Don't you be ripping on the cover of issue 22, Clyde in NJ. So it gave something away. So what? After almost 2 years of awesome and often misleading covers, you're gonna give the Kirk-man shit for using one that wasn't misleading at all? He writes it! He can do whatever he wants with it. If he wants the next 20 issues to be about all the survivors drinking tea and discussing politics while simultaneously ramming hot steel pokers up each others' asses, it's his right. I mean, it would probably stop selling real quick (or not, Carol's got a sweet ass), but he can if he wants.

No shit. I'm damned if I do, damned if I don't. By the way, How did you see me plots for the next 20 issues?

3. Now that Carol and Tyreese probably aren't together anymore, can I marry her?

If you find a machine that can transform your matter into my imagination and Charlie's ink lines, maybe... but seriously... it wouldn't be worth it. There are ZOMBIES in this comic.

4. Forget what I said a few issues ago about killing Rick and putting Tyreese in charge. Upon closer examination, I have decided that they are both too insane to lead, and Hershel should be in charge. The guy has done nothing but eat shit sandwiches for the entire series, why not do something good for him?

I think I've heard this about ALL the characters at least once. Sorry, I hate each and every one of these made-up people.

5. Okay, Carol is still alive, apparently, so this question doesn't really matter, but while she was lying there, supposedly bleeding to death, it looked like everyone just took off and left Sophia alone with her, unsupervised and unarmed. DID NO ONE ELSE NOTICE THIS?! DID THE SURVIVORS NOT THINK ABOUT THE STUPIDITY OF THAT FOR EVEN A SECOND?! I mean, what if Carol HAD died, and came back as a zombie, and attacked Sophia? While it would have been sick and twisted as all hell (I'm almost surprised you DIDN'T do it, what with you're obvious hatred for little kids and all), and interesting to read ("Oh, mommy, you're okay after all! Yay! Why don't you say anything? Why are you ripping my vital organs from my torso? Why are you..." "Chomp, chomp..."), why would Lori of all people let that happen? But Carol didn't die.

Thank god for

that, huh? Actually, I think one of the five-thousand characters in this book was keeping an eye on Sophia. Maybe Hershel's son, Billy. He never really does much.

6. About berating Jake and Clyde earlier, sorry about that guys. Just had to get that out. I don't hate you or anything. You read this book, which means you're both bad-ass. I'm sorry I said those things, baby, it's just... I get so lonely sometimes, and scared, y'know? Come on back to Ike, baby. I promise I'll be better this time. Let's sing Proud Mary, like in the old days...

Okay, that's all. Keep up the good work, ye gods of zombieness.

Kicking ass for the lord,
Dan Haskell,

You had so much more conviction before you wussed out and apologized for no damn reason. I'm ashamed.

Rick has got to be getting sicker from his chest wound in issue one!

Tyreese knocking him around probably isn't helping much! I am all for the police copter from Dawn of the Dead landing at the prison! Have you seen Undead? More like Unwatchable! Now I understand the whole bit about the alien landing jokes in the letters page because of Undead!

Actually, I think those started before I saw Undead. Also, they're certainly not a way of making fun of that movie. I LOVED that movie. It's got some really cool stuff in it.

Land of the Dead dvd is cool, especially with the extra about Shaun of the Dead meeting George Romero. Why don't you cameo in a zombie movie?

I applied but they never called me back. I think it's my prison time.

When is the script book coming out? I appreciate everyone's work on catching the comic up to schedule---when the hell do you have time to sleep? Loved Invincible/Spider-Man in Team-Up! I cannot wait for the rest of the story in Invincible! Will Rick cameo in your Marvel zombie book? Love your work and thanks again for the good reading material!!!!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

The script book is in stores now. Rick will not be appearing in Marvel Zombies. Thanks for the kind words, Bobby.

Robert,
I am looking forward to seeing you at San Diego Comic Con next year. :) Just read issue 23 of WD and thought it was the best one yet!!! A couple comments/questions:

1. Any thoughts on Showtime's Masters Of Horror?

I'll be buying the DVD. I don't have Showtime.

2. Any thoughts on the new Horror Channel (which I believe was supposed to launch on October 31st

and air UNCUT films but was delayed for "technical reasons.")

If I got it, I'd watch it like the dickens.

3. I am EXTREMELY excited about Tony Moore drawing Vertigo's The Exterminators.

Peace.
Andrew Rootz Chesterfield Missouri

Me too! I can't wait to read that book.

Letter Hacks,

So I was reading the Walking Dead thread on Comic Book Resources a little bit ago, and a user was commenting on how he thinks the book has been neglecting the zombie aspect of this zombie book for the last several issues. Then something dawned on me.

The zombies have become sort of a non-issue in the comic as of late. Yeah, the story's always been about the people who survived the zombie apocalypse and not the zombies, but the zombies were always there. Until the people moved into the prison, at which point Rick and company pretty much stopped thinking about the zombies because they were all trapped on the outside of the fence. And that's why the book hasn't had much zombie action. We as readers are starting to become a little too comfortable with a horde of zombies outside of a chain link fence because the characters are doing just the same. The absence of the zombie problem from the book is symbolic of the absence of the zombie problem from the minds of the characters. A bonafide literary device in a comic book? Tell me it isn't true!

And of course, we all know what happens when the survivors of a zombie apocalypse start to ignore the problem...

Holy smokes! You'd think I'd planned all this from the beginning. (wink)

Issue #23 was great as usual, but I do have a suggestion that would help me (and I'm sure some other readers) out a bit when digging into a new issue. The story always transitions pretty seamlessly from one issue to the next. I remember when I was reading the first trade I had no clue where one issue started and the next ended. No definitive end to the action in the previous issue means it takes me a bit to remember exactly where the last issue left off, especially when it was six weeks ago or more. Maybe you could put a "Previously In..." page at the beginning of each issue, as a replacement for the character guide at the end of each issue (which really doesn't need to be every issue anyway). Even just a smaller version of the last page of the previous issue, along with a few mugshots of the characters that'll be showing up in the issue would be great. You don't need to go into a long explanation of everything that's happened in the series like Marvel always feels the need to do, but a short recap would be appreciated. I'm sure new readers would appreciate that as well, instead of just starting with a page of Tyreese punching Rick in the face for some reason.

Hm. I think I'll start doing that with this issue. Good idea.

BTW, the Invincible/Spider-Man MTU was one of my favorite comics of the year. Doesn't seem worth writing to the Invincible or MTU letters page just to tell you that, but it had me rolling with laughter all the way through. Great job, man.

Aaron Stege

That's cool. It appears this letters column is the place to talk about that book anyway. Hey, if Brian can talk about Avengers in Powers I can talk about Team-Up here. Although, we all know he does that because he doesn't have enough mail to fill up that letters column. The hack.

Dear TWD,
Great issue. However, I found myself more intrigued by the side stories (Allen dying and Carol living) than the whole fight and subsequent fainting. It will be very interesting now to see where Rick and Tyreese's relationship goes from here.

The overall story looks very much like the story of Rick Grimes and his slow, but eventual, "turn to the dark side". I hope it is. But then again I'm even more excited by the cover of #25! In most zombie-apocalypse stories the remnants of government seem to be worse than the plague itself. I'm hoping for something different (like what I keep hinting at, the "turn" of Rick, though I will not be surprised if the "military" takes over the prison, and at first seem "evil") and that this might take us into a larger epic struggle of survival for all of mankind. It will be interesting, again, to see how Rick interprets his responsibility to the group when others arrive who are equally capable, if not more so, of protecting them.

One constructive criticism, I'm not all for the big list of characters at the end of the book. You're selling bi-annual TPBs (plus the upcoming hard-cover) so any reader can catch up on all that information much easier than comic-fans could in the past. It was great the first time I saw it, but with each issue I'm liking it less and less.

I would rather see that space dedicated to either Team TWD (specifically regarding TWD) or fan-art, upcoming script previews for TWD, previews of other work by Robert and Team TWD, or a detailed background of an individual character. This is just some random items flung against the wall.

Sincerely,
Merl Key

Thanks for the kind words, Merl. I'll think of something on the character bios. For now, though... they're no in this issue.

Kirkman,

I just read issue 23, and I think it may be your best yet! Not a zombie in sight, but still lots of great action! The fight between Rick and Ty was great. The cover set it up very well, and the first page was a great way to start. It'll be interesting to see

how the rest of the group reacts to the info that came out during the fight (i.e. Ty killing Chris and Rick killing Dex). This one fight might open the door to many more. Glenn and Maggie running around naked during the fight was pretty amusing too...

Carol surviving her attempted suicide should be very interesting. How will she explain it to everyone else? Will they try to help her or look down on her for trying to take the "easy" way out (while potentially endangering everyone else in the prison when she turned if no one knew she was dead)? Will they take it out on the new girl, Michonne? All interesting possibilities that I can't wait to see unfold!

I'm surprised to see Allen die so soon. I thought you'd drag this out a little longer so we'd get to see his reaction to Rick trying to save him. I also expected him to live so the group would learn that zombie bites don't kill if treated properly... Apparently, that's not the case though.

I don't know... Allen did lose a lot of blood...

I'm not quite sure what happened with Rick on the last page. Did he just collapse after the beating he took? Did it have anything to do with him shooting Allen? I guess we'll find out next issue...

He collapsed after the fight. The smoking gun is a little misleading.

Glad to hear there's going to be a poster soon. Any word on what that poster will be? Is it going to be one of the covers or something brand new? Or are you going to keep us in suspense by refusing to tell us?

Don't I always choose suspense?

Really looking forward to the next issue. I hope the fact that the aliens are now involved doesn't detract from the book... I really don't know why you revealed Michonne's alien ties in the letters page though. That just seems like bad writing to me...

Have I ever been accused of anything less?

Thanks for all your hard work!

Jim Amato

PS - When are we going to get to see the zombies play volleyball?

Next issue.

Kirkman and Co,

Just wanted to tell everyone involved that you are doing a great job! I have never been this excited about a series... well... EVER. Every month (or more-that was a jab at you Kirkman-) I head to my local comic shop (Chris's Comics in Marshfield, MA) and run home to get my latest surprise-filled

issue.

I just finished issue #21 and I just have to comment on the Letter Hacks talk of staying at the prison or roaming aimlessly. I do think you could spend a lot of time at the prison there is just sooo much you can do with it. I could see the group finally leaving after an extreme event takes place (but at the rate bodies are dropping that would be hard to pull off). Ok now that I am done sucking your balls, I have a few questions: Will we ever see and zombie animals? RE has zombie dogs but I am thinking about zombie gorillas, elephants, or even lamas.

I've said no zombie animals before... but I hadn't thought about zombie Gorillas yet...

That would just be strange scene if the group came across a Zoo in there travels. Is there an address I could mail an issue and have you sign to me?

Sorry, I just don't have the time to do this. I wish I could.

I don't know if you have been asked this yet so bare with me. I would be willing to pay a fee or whatever but it would just be a great thing to have. Please, for the love of the undead give me an address! Also, please do NOT write the address of an asylum under this question.

Anyways, keep up the great work everyone. Well, until the undead tear through my face like a crackhead through a syringe wrapper - make mine Kirkman!

-Andy Cooper

Like a crackhead through a syringe wrapper? Sheesh!

Firstly, this will be my 1st comic write-in so get happy. punisher, ghost rider, cyberforce, team 7/ webworks didn't warrant it, however, your comic has enough motivation for me now...that and a long ass doldrum on and otherwise slow Sunday night. So, long story short, the work you have put out is exceptional, well thought out, and most of all, inspired. SOME POINTS OF ORDER

1. Ever since I was 11 there have been a series of nightmares where zombies and similar imagery perpetuates. This is largely due to an episode one halloween where I watched "night of the living dead" alone, hopped up on sugar, in an old/creaky house with a lot of people wandering the streets at night, etc. etc. Now, at 29, they still persist however due to the advent of a certain psychedelic encounter, otherwise known as freshman year, I can now dream lucidly. Sometimes I get away, sometimes I get nipped, and so forth. Well, I took some initiative during psych and to be brief, they are a metaphor for anxiety concerning time (thanks dr. torrello). Zombies never tire, always pursue, and yada yada yada. This makes for good writing but restless sleep.

2. You've made a very believable microcosm. All zombie films work on this premise, but yours seems feasible. Wanna' say gothic-horror "Moby Dick", but it's more contemporary and believable.

More contemporary than "Moby Dick?" The hell you say!

The problems therein aren't so cliché. The characters react on a very un-comicbook manner, more adult and complex, so again, well done. Rick in particular is an excellent study. He's the glue, but very few of his "crew" seem to appreciate that he's saved their lives many times over. But they crucify him when something goes wrong. #23 Tyresse is way out of line to be blunt. I would've thought he'd be more unhinged after his daughter and all that though. Glenn/Maggie seem very believable however.

Thanks.

3. The story's sine wave of action/dialogue has pissed off some readers, but it can't be all combat all the time.

I agree.

4. WTF is up with Diamond? I can't get #21 for the life of me and they are unreliable at best. Thoughts?

Well, the issues sell out pretty quickly after they come out. I'd recommend preordering them at your local comic shop.

5. will the origin of the zombie blight be exposed?

No plans.

6. A lot of people talking about a TV series. Such a good idea in terms of budget/acting. a horror-esque Lost? You going to jump on that or what?

Pretty much out of my hands. I'd certainly love for there to be one.

7. Your realism is incredible. ex) frozen zombies in the sub development. Very imaginative. The scene where the snow falls off the gate to reveal the sign was a masterpiece of suspension as well. classy...

Thanks.

8. lastly (pressed for time and must go), are they going to make probing raids out of the prison to find more survivors, kill zombies?

Maybe. I don't want to give things away.

Many many thanks and much respect,
Jeff Thompson ("taking it slow" and all that)

Thanks for the letter, Jeff.

Mr. Kirkman,
Thanks for the great comic. After reading the letters section in issue #22 with all of the zombie related questions an unasked question came to my somewhat warped mind: Do the undead who eat the living move their bowels?

Inquiring minds want to know.
Marc Cawiezel

That is currently unknown. It has to go

SOMEWHERE

though... but I would guess their bodies aren't working well enough for any kind of digestion to occur. Just for the sake of whatever... I'm just going to assume their bodies are so toxic they dissolve whatever they eat. Another thing is that most zombies really aren't getting to eat that much in their lifespan. A chunk here, a chunk there.

It's not like they're constantly eating after the initial craziness.

Hey,
Walking Dead has officially become Loitering Snooze. Dance with who brought you... zombies...remember? Soap operatic tripe may have its place, but hardly in a medium with the visual potential of comics. So much promise squandered so abruptly.
Blech!

-Joe

There will be plenty of action and gore to keep the manly men happy. Stick with it. If you'll excuse me, now... I've got a bear to kill.

I think this is the time when people stop talking about how great this awesome new comic book is and start wondering when it'll jump the shark. (Or have they already? I usually only gloss over the vast, endless letters page each issue contains) Anyways, not yet. At least in my book.

I'm sure a couple of people have complained about the lack of zombies in the past couple of issues. That doesn't bug me much. Walking Dead always seemed more focused on the characters and how they changed and adapted and grew in a world infested by undead cannibals. The long stretch in the prison illustrates this with more conviction than the rest of the title's lifespan so far.

The stint in the prison is a good example of the "let's hole ourselves up while the hungry zombies fester outside" aspect of most zombie cinema. In retrospect, I'm surprised "abandoned prison" wasn't used before "shopping mall", "military base", "fortified city", or "police station" were. It seems so obvious now, which is a trademark of good writing.

I'm glad this seems to be the end of that and the beginning of something new though. The prison train took you about as far as it could go and it's cool that some federals will be making their way to the book. I knew you were going to do that the second Rick began his big speech about how nobody was coming. Of course, the "big speech" is an old horror movie cliché, but your execution of it made it seem more like an homage than a retread back to the well.

The art is still solid. Sometimes the characters are hard to distinguish from each other, which was never the case when Tony Moore was on the job. Still, Adlard and Rathburn are growing as artists. I really like their experimentation with graywash in this issue. The tones have never looked better.

Anyways, great work. This is your most fervently

loved comic book series for a reason.

Sputnik Jones

Thanks for the kind words, Sputnik.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I really enjoy your working on The Walking Dead, Marvel Team-Up, Marvel Knights 2099 and your arc

on Captain America. I love how you, like Romero, focus on more of the human side of the zombie stories than just the blood and gore that comes from killing zombies. With that said here are a few questions:

1: We all got to read the Invincible issue of Marvel Team-Up. Which leads me to this: So when is Rick going to show up in Marvel Team-Up and kill zombie with Spider-Man?

Issue 27, most likely.

2: All joking aside now, after reading the "Crossover" arc in Ultimate FF by Mark Millar and Greg Land, I saw that you are writing "Marvel Zombies" and Sean Phillips is doing the art. I am now highly anticipating this mini-series knowing your approach on zombies and knowing that Sean Phillips will deliver with his art. How much did you enjoy doing the mini and are you jealous that Millar came up with the idea first?

I had a blast working on the book. Sean Phillips is a great artist and Arthur Suydam's covers are reason enough to be the book.

3: What's your favorite zombie flick? Mine is the extended cut of Romero's Dawn of the Dead.

I still haven't watched that... I've still got that DVD sitting on my shelf.

And finally:

4: Have you seen Peter Jackson's "Dead Alive"? If not, you must get your hands on it now. The movie is the goriest I've ever seen and it's so over the top, it make me laugh so hard and just say, "That isn't right."

My dad made Tony Moore and I watch Dead Alive when we were in 8th grade. It changed our lives.

Keep up the good work and I can't wait to read where you take us with the new direction with issue 25.

Dale Varley

You and me both, Dale!

It was recently brought to my attention that I might not be making you smooth cats as away of my other books as possible. So in an effort to do that I'll be swiping Bendis' style (yeah, again) and running a handy dandy list at the end of these letters columns. Enjoy!

ITEM! Shipping the end of MARCH we'll have INVINCIBLE The Ultimate Collection VOLUME 2. It'll be a nice thick hardcover like the first one. It has issues 14-24 along with #0 and the Free Comic Book Day story and loads of extras. It'll retail for \$34.95

ITEM! THE PACT #4 is in stores NOW and has been for a few weeks now. It's written by me, drawn by Jason Howard and features the return of a certain villain from this very book. You don't have to have read issues 1-3 to understand the issue. It's a lot of fun.

ITEM! SUPERPATRIOT: WAR ON TERROR #4 is finally coming out. Sorry for the long delay. It's been resolicited for MARCH and should be in stores toward the end of the month. It's our big finale... it's going to blow doors off--which considering how much time we spent putting the doors ON... should mean something to you.

ITEM! THE WALKING DEAD keeps going strong, if you like horror or people talking, or horrific things happening to people who talk, you'll dig it. Pick it up. Issue 26 should be out around the same time--or on the same DAY as this issue.

ITEM! BATTLE POPE is coming out regularly after a small snag with a worthless colorist. Issue 5 is on stands now and future issues should be following at a monthly rate, or the fur will fly. It's a fun series, written by me, drawn by Tony Moore & Friends and colors by aforementioned worthless colorist Val Staples. Ask for it by name.

ITEM! MARVEL TEAM-UP #19 is a kick ass story set in the Marvel Universe from 1991 featuring CABLE and WOLVERINE teaming up to fight THE MANDARIN. It features art by CORY WALKER and CLIFF RATHBURN and is going to be colored by VAL STAPLES. Ask for it by name. It's also a prelude to the big "FREEDOM RING" storyline that runs through Team-Up 20-24 featuring art by ANDY KUHN so pick it up.

ITEM! My second issue of ULTIMATE X-MEN should be out by now. Featuring art by TOM RANEY. It's a blast working on these characters and I'm hoping the fun I'm having shows. I've got a lot of cool stuff planned for my run, so check it out.

ITEM! Unless you've been living under a rock you've heard about MARVEL ZOMBIES my mini-series with SEAN PHILIPS over at Marvel. The first issue just got a second printing and issue 3 should be on the shelves when this hits so be on the lookout--it's CRAZY FUN.

I think that's all for now.

I'll see you guys back here next month, or earlier. Until then, keep it REAL.

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Christ.

In the proofreading stage it was brought to my attention that I'm possibly going to catch hell over this *Zombie Arena Fighting* since there was that cage fight in *Land of the Dead*. Once again, I've got to play the "I had this planned before hand" card--which I'll admit is totally lame. All I can really say is that this will be more along the lines of *Roman Gladiator Arena fights* than *Small Underground Bar Cage Fighting*. And in the end... it will be as vastly different from that brief scene in *Land of the Dead* as this entire book has been from *28 Days Later*.

We've got big stuff coming up--so stay tuned.

Also, I just wanted to give you guys a heads up. Sculptor Extraordinaire CLAYBURN MOORE has signed on to do a *WALKING DEAD STATUE*. That's right kids, we've got one on the horizon. I'm totally excited. I'll keep you guys posted and you'll see pictures here as soon as we've got them to show.

Let's get this show on the road and answer some letters!

Mr. Kirkman,
Hi, you possibly may remember me. I had the pleasure of meeting you at a Boston Comic Con. (there was an S&M Con next door...Woo Hoo!) My best bud (and alternate reality life-partner) Jon Hernandez took a picture of you and me together. (you were rubbing my freshly buzzed head). The picture is framed and proudly displayed in my living room. Jon was the guy with the totally out of control beard and I bought a *Metal Men* comic for you because of a story you related about your youth. Anyway, enough memory triggers.

Metal Man comic... I was lost before but now I've got it.

It's cliched, but in the 37 years (yeah...37) I've been reading/collecting comics, I've never written in before. I'm a zombie fanatic from WAY back. My buddies and I snuck into the original *Dawn of the Dead* back in '78 and my life was FOREVER changed. For a while I had "zombie plague" nightmares that would wake me in the middle of the night. I don't have them anymore but when I have time to kill and my mind wanders, I STILL think about what I would do if it happened.

What actually prompted me to write was I overheard my teenaged sons and their friends talking about

what they're going to do WHEN it happens. They were arguing about who would be the leader. My 19 year old seems to be the alpha male. They have a plan in place concerning where they will initially meet and where they will go! I got such a kick out of this because it's exactly how I thought at their age. (aaaahhh sweet imagination) This particular genre seems to affect fans so profoundly.

Anyway, onto *The Walking Dead* #24. The book continues to surprise and entertain. The "blow out" between Rick and Tyreese in issue #23 was unexpected but made sense. I've suspected all along that the title *Walking Dead* referred more to the survivors than the zombies. Wasn't Rick's right hand messed up pretty badly when he beat Thomas near to death? I've been expecting some sort of repercussions from that. Infections possibly prompting amputation? I guess the damage wasn't as extensive as it initially appeared.

It healed up cleanly because of the bandaging and what not. He's still got some damage too it--his grip is really weak. We'll be seeing more of this as time goes on. I'm not going to forget.

Oh, just saw the ad for the Deluxe HC. Looks AWESOME. Are the signed and numbered editions going to be available in limited quantities at various comic shops or will they need to be special ordered?

Fanatic for life..
Bob Dore

As you can see some of this mail is old. The hardcover has come out and the signed and numbered edition was limited to 150. Some people that special ordered it didn't even get a copy. Which is a shame. I really feel bad about that... but that's the nature of limited stuff. In other news, we've got a NEW *Walking Dead* hardcover on the way. This one will be a little more affordable, at \$34.95 and will contain issues 1-12. It'll be on sale in July. And NO I'm not abandoning the deluxe hardcover format, there will still be a volume two deluxe book around the time that issue 48 comes out. These smaller hardcovers will have less stuff for less money and won't be limited like the deluxe one. These smaller hardcovers will be more like the *Invincible Ultimate Collection*.

Dear Kirk-man, (that's your superhero name)
Just read the walking Dead #24, and i felt inspired to write. The walking dead #24 was a good read for a number of reasons.

1) It seems to me that the entire issue took place in the span of, like, ten minutes. I really liked the pacing. It makes it seem like something really big is about to happen. No zombie action, but there is an impending doom that seems to be hovering about. Those shots of the zombies at the fence are good fore-shadowing. I can almost hear that fence crashing down at any second...

2) Another damn good cover. Rick has lost it. The somber blue color scheme was a good comparison to the insanity in Rick's eyes. It summoned a conflicting feeling about Rick and his sanity; which is exactly what this issue was about. I still side with Rick, and see everything he has done thus far as being pretty rational for the circumstances he has been thrust into. Maybe other readers see him as having gone a little off the deep end, but so far I have agreed with his decisions.

3) Interesting that the governing committee would have an even number of members. A 2 against 2 vote will surely come up at some point, so I am curious why you chose an even number for leadership.

I figured it'd be best if all important decisions required a unanimous vote. They won't be voting on every little thing--just the big stuff.

4) I generally think that double-page spreads are complete B.S., but this one was very powerful. A nice finale for the hardback's final pages. "We are the walking dead!" It makes perfect sense, and it's something that has never crossed my mind. The title isn't about the zombies anymore than the story is. The story is about the lives and survival of the main cast. They are the walking dead because of the inevitability of their situation. That was a very classic moment.

It's time for a few questions.

1) Do the first 24 issues all take place on Earth-1, or Earth-2? What Earth are we on? Will there be 6 mini series focusing on minute aspects of your plot that I can read while waiting on major plot points to be explored? "Infinite Dead"? "The Dead/Human war"? "The Walking Dead Project"? "The Dead United"? I really like to feel like I am being suckered into spending lots of money to get a full story, so I hope you are planning some pretty big summer events.

How did you get a look at the upcoming schedule?! CRAP.

2) If it became a question of the series being able to continue and be profitable, would having more ads be an alternative to cancellation? I am a bit unclear as to how the system works at image. The latest issue had zero non-walking dead ads (Thank you!!!!), so I am a little curious how that affects the profitability of the ook. I just counted the number of ads in the latest issue of Uncanny X-men (27 ad pages vs 24 story pages. It almost seems unbelievable), and I could not believe how many ads I had to suffer through in one comic. In your book there are zero ads breaking up the story. I think that's great, but I am curious about how that works.

This book survives on profits from the sale of the actual book alone. We don't sell ads. If we did I'd never put them in the middle of the story.

I've always liked how Image books never did that. Although, I gotta say... I don't even NOTICE them when I read books from Marvel and DC.

3) You're right. The "Savage Dragon" is the cat's pajamas. I wish that it would come out sometime. I'm sure that being the president is swell and all, but I miss the "Savage Dragon". Maybe you could threaten to punch him in the neck if he doesn't have a new issue out soon. I saw your rather intimidating picture in the Wizard top ten writers, and I am sure he would respond to any threats you might make. Speaking of which...

Thanks for the heads up. I threatened to punch Erik Larsen in the neck and he put issue 122 of Savage Dragon out in January. If I'm not mistaken, issue 123 will be out by the time this issue is out. I've even seen pages from 124. If I didn't know better--I'd say the old man was doing a monthly book.

4) Are you still expecting that pecan pie that I promised in the last letter? Judging from that pic in wizard I would say that you have had enough pie. OH, SNAP! You were just schooled. Don't hate.

Am I really that FAT? Fuck all you people.

5) I bought all those 2099 one-shots you did for Marvel. I dug all of them!
Any plans for follow-ups?

I'm following up on them in the current LEAGUE OF LOSERS arc in Marvel Team-Up 15-18. Mutant 2099 makes and appearance and so does the Daredevil 2099 from that one-shot.

The Black Panther and the Inhumans ones were really cool, but the Daredevil one was my favorite.

Alright, that's all I got. Thanks for printing my last letter. I will be sending a care package of tacos and porn stars if this one sees print. (gotta up the ante)

Until next time,
Justin "slam-bizzle"manis

Jesus man--I don't want PORN STARS in my tacos. Asshole.

Dude...

"We ARE the walking dead!"

That was one fucking cool ending!

This could have been the last issue of the book and I would have gone away happy: the final realization of their situation. The fact that it wasn't the last issue, just makes me even happier. I cannot wait for #25, even if it is all normal-sized and un-bonus-filled!

The issues have been flying onto the shelves in the past couple of weeks, and you just haven't let up. I'd been watching and waiting for Tyreese and Rick to come to blows for ages now, ever since they came to the prison. With every issue the tension was visibly mounting between the pair. And yet when the smack down came, I was completely taken by surprise! And I loved how the last page of #22 continued into the first page of #23. Who gets credit for that idea: you or Charlie?

Try Erik Larsen. Don't you assholes read the letters columns?

And speaking of Charlie, that splash page at the end of #24? Shit, dude! I want THAT as a poster!

I won't go on any longer, if only because a lot of the letters seem to reiterate the same points, albeit unintentionally. I gotta tell you, I am seriously considering that 560 page hardcover, even if I do have all the issues already...

Keep up the good work guys.
Paul Shinn

The hardcover is totally sweet. You won't regret the purchase.

Dear Kirkman,

"WE ARE THE WALKING DEAD!" I remember a time when you said early on, later saying that it was pretentious. Still, it's good stuff. It seems like the point has been made, yet the book has finally gotten to the point at the same time. Oh, and I complained in the Invincible letter that you didn't print my letters. I was going to say something about the covers not being as great as they were, but the preview for issue 25 changed my mind. Besides, the psycho look on Rick's face on issue 24 is great. Did you not print those letters cause I gave a shout out? I knew that was lame, but did it anyways. I think I also mentioned David Hume. Man, college is killing me.

Man... I don't even know why I don't print some letters. Length, lack of a funny reply... who knows.

So some questions in wonderful numbered format:
1. Were you channeling Rhodes with Rick's rant?

Not really. I channeled Rhodes over in Marvel Zombies, though.

2. Have you ever thought about doing something with vampires? I personally don't care for them, with few exceptions, but it might be cool to see your take (but not in this book).

Shit... I guess I better get rid of the vampires in the next issue.

3. So what killed Allen? Infection from the amputation, zombie bite, loss of blood, or lack of will? Or was it my insistence? In that case, can you kill Andrea? She has it coming. Also, Allen is still listed as alive on the Characters page.

Yeah, I'm not running the characters pages again until I have time to update them. I'm not going to reveal what killed Allen. It could have been any one of those things.

4. Do you have a thing against guys named Allen. Saddest moment in Invincible history! Oh well, I voted to make him a HeroClix figure.

I've SEEN his HeroClix figure... it's GODDAMN GREAT. I don't know why I used Allen in all books without even realizing it. Oh, well.

5. Ever read Rick Spears' Dead West? Good stuff.

I bought a copy. Was really looking forward to reading it... and lost it to the piles. I don't know where the damn thing is now. I'll get around to it soon. I love the stuff Rick Spears and Rob G. do.

So hey, I can now alternate between the Spider-Man zombie cover of Marvel Zombies #1 and the Wolverine cover from #3 as my computer wallpaper. Man, the covers alone have sold the book to me. Give me that c

chance and I'll gush all over the letters pages of those books. Here's to two more years and more of Walking Dead and various other Kirkman zombie books. Can't wait to see the Ultimate X-Men fight Ultimate Voodoo Man and his zombie hoard? Do zombies hoard?

Chris Pitts

The only things they hoard are those cute little matchbox cars. They love those things.

Dear Robert "Don't Call Me Bob" Kirkman,

Please don't call me that. ;-)

Seems like you're getting a ton of letters from fans that proclaim The Walking Dead to be the best comic there is. Well, I'm here to set the record straight. TWD is not the best comic- Invincible is.

Have I printed this letter before?

I do love me some TWD though. After I discovered the greatness of Invincible, I bought the first three trades of TWD before I read a single page of it. That's a risky venture you know. What if I read the first trade and it stank? I'd be stuck with three stinky trades, and I'd be pissed about wasting my money. Fortunately it didn't stink, it rocked!

It took me a little longer to try Marvel Team-up. I wouldn't try it, because I think that the Scott Kolins covers are pug-fugly! (You'll probably interject to stick up for Scott, because you're cool like that, but sorry you're wrong. Please don't cuss at me.) **(You are retarded. Scott Kolins is a fantastic artist.)** I did finally read some MTU though, and it rocks too. I learned then to never doubt The Kirkman, and I've been buying up back issues of anything you wrote. Most of it is pretty great.

On a different note, I was one of those Mormon Missionaries, and I spent some time in Lexington. I wonder if I ever knocked on your door. Were you that guy who threatened to shoot me, if I didn't get off your property? I have an idea. If you want to make up for threatening to kill me you can have Charlie Adlard draw a Mormon Missionary zombie in an issue of TWD. Y'know, put a bike helmet on his head, have him wearing a short sleeved dress shirt, and the black name tag on the chest pocket. The tag could say Elder Ottley. Ha! That would be awesome!

I don't think I've ever had one of those missionaries come to my door. You guys don't seem to be doing your job from where I sit. If I end up going to hell because of you... I'm going to be totally pissed.

Now quit reading letters and get to sleep. You need to scale back on the letters page before you burnout. I need you to stay fresh. If you burnout, you might commit some heinous crime against humanity, like take a hiatus, and that simply won't do.

Brad Linford

PS Congrats on making Wizard's Top 10 writers. You deserve it. Also, Capes is righteous, keep doing the backup stories in Invincible, and bring back Brit.

More Brit is on the way. Did I say that?

A committee is a great idea! Rick's wife really looked concerned for her husband, oh wait, SHE'S A SKANK WITH ANOTHER MAN'S BABY! My bad! Have you ever given thought to Bendis guest writing an issue of Walking Dead? Or, at the least, pay back for listing your

phone number, have a Bendis zombie getting destroyed/killed? Anyway, thanks for the great book and happy holidays!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

I wouldn't let Bendis touch this book with YOUR dick. What do I want? A book that's just 22 pages of people sitting around TALKING? That'd be--oh... wait a minute.

Forget I said anything.

Mr. Kirkman,

Issue 24. Whoa. That was some good comics. You guys never disappoint. It seems to me that instead of losing it and going off the deep end as expected, Rick has really just opened his eyes and has finally come to terms with the way the world is now. It'll be interesting to see how Rick's new outlook (that things will never go back to normal again) collides with the hopes of rebuilding society that a lot of the characters are still holding on to. And the cover to issue 25? Nothing says let's fight back for society's status quo like a bunch of riot cops. There is some interesting stuff coming our way, I am sure of it.

As for flashbacks, I agree with you. If I wanted flashbacks all over the place, I'd go watch "Lost" or something. Come to think of it, that is what I do.

Lost is a great show.

Also, will we see Rick dealing with Patricia now? She is crazy, or "misguided" I guess, and she's already put everyone's safety in jeopardy, which seems like it should be a pretty big deal to Rick right now. And I hate her.

Isn't it good to have people around that you hate?

Ok, that's all, thanks for rocking my zombie world so much, as well as my super-hero world, and my marvel universe world. You are a king.

-Dan Means

Yeah... a BURGER king.

Kirkman and Company,

First of all, give my geekish existence a break and print this letter. I wrote a very thought-provoking missive about another issue and I think you printed in the neighborhood of 25,000 letters about it but not mine. It gave me a bad complex.

So most of the time I'm reading this letters thing "have I printed ALL these guys before? What the hell--it seems like I print EVERY letter." This issue must be for people who've written in but never gotten printed. Weird.

Secondly, kudos all around for a stellar twenty-fourth issue. I really like the turn you're taking by delving more into the sociological and psychological issues facing our heroes. I know it's been there since the beginning but it really seems to be coming to the forefront now. I kept thinking as I read the issue that it was like an adult Lord of the Flies. Have you read that book? And if so, has it provided any inspiration for the series?

I haven't even seen the movie.

To be honest, I hadn't really thought about the implications of how much ground you can cover with this thing. You can get into whether people are inherently good or evil, whether or not civilization is just a thin veneer to be easily stripped off when society breaks down. You can cover a lot of philosophical questions while, you know, zombies eat people.

Keep up the good work,
Crisman Strunk

I'll try to live up to your expectations.

Thanks for another great issue, Kirkman (and Dead team). I wouldn't be surprised if you get complaints that almost the whole issue was a speech from Rick, but I thought it was a great way to slow down the pace a little after the action last month. Looking at the next issue promo, it looks like we'll be getting right back into the action soon enough.

I also thought it was a great way to wrap up the first hardcover. The last three pages really provided a sense of finality, but leaves the future wide open. It's clear now that there is no hope of rescue, and it's time to create a new life in the zombie world.

Speaking of the hardcover, I love the idea, but I don't think I'm going to be able to afford the price tag... Granted, it's only about \$25 more than the individual issues at cover price, but I don't know about dropping \$100 at once... Maybe I'll find a way to swing it, but it's looking a little doubtful...

One complaint I had with issue 24... While I really liked the last three pages (I'd really like to buy that two page spread from Charlie, but again, there's the money issue), I didn't really care for the line "We are the walking dead." It makes for a great splash page, but it felt kind of corny to have Rick explain the title of the book to us. I know you've done the same in your letters pages, and that was fine, but actually seeing it spelled out that way in the context of the story seemed a little silly. I guess it's just a personal preference kind of thing... It's not like it's going to make me stop buying the book.

Hoaky? Maybe... but I liked the impact of it. I went back and forth over that scene for MONTHS and in the end, I like it. Keep in mind... the characters don't know it's the title of the book. Or that they're even in a book for that matter.

I'm really liking this committee idea that the group came up with (I'm surprised we didn't see how that decision was made. Having us pick up when Rick wakes up makes it seem like it's really HIS story, yet you say he could die at any time...). Anyway, I'm looking forward to the first disagreement in the committee. Rick says he likes the idea, but after having total control for so long, I can see him getting frustrated very quickly when things don't go his way. Another throw down with Tyreese is almost a given!

Now for my numbered questions:

1. In Letter Hacks, one of your readers (Jeff) mentioned that Tony won't be doing covers any more starting with 26. I haven't heard this anywhere else, so is this true? I hope not, because I do really like his covers. If he is leaving, does that mean Charlie gets bumped up to cover artist?

As you can see, this actually happened with 25. Tony got too busy working on Fear Agent (for Image) and Exterminators (for Vertigo) and didn't have time to do covers for TWD any more.

I think you'll agree Charlie and Cliff have more than filled his shoes.

2. Well, I only had one question, but I know how you love numbered questions...

Keep up the good work. I'll be eagerly awaiting the next issue. You're going to keep them coming every one or two weeks from now on, right? We're getting used to it, and you wouldn't want to disappoint us, would you? :-)

Jim Amato

As you can see, keeping up the every few weeks pace is pretty hard to do. Eventually--we'll just be monthly, consistently. It's hard keeping things on track but we'll do it. That's the goal.

Kirkman,

I haven't written in a while. Why did this issue result in my testicles getting bruised?

1) Carol kissing Rick: This additional wrinkle (possible love triangle developments?) adds yet another layer of complexity. I thought about why Carol would do this (Trust me, I didn't take that much time out of my valuable day. White man, please!): a) Tyreese's betrayal; b) Tyreese lied through omission in issue #23 regarding the fellatio scene; c) Rick defending Carol sets up this damsel-in-distress scenario; and, d) What other viable male companion/lover is there for her to choose?

2) Rick deposed as their unofficial leader: a) The reasons why the women wanted only men on the committee totally made sense. The world they live in is very primal and people adapt/revert to survival tactics. I believe the women consenting in this crucial area doesn't mean they are casting themselves as subordinates. I believe that they believe their strengths lie elsewhere; they know this because women really do rule, they just let men think they do. 3) Rick's speech from pages 16-21: He may no longer be in charge, but his honesty (eating crow: "You kill -- you die.") and ability to think outside the box ("We'll make new rules -- we'll still be humane and kind and we'll still care for each other.") still, in my mind, makes him the unofficial leader.

4) Rick says, "We are the walking dead!" Holy fuck, man. You blind-sided me with this. You flipped the script with that one. This statement absolutely CHANGES the perspective of the name, of the book, of everything.

Okay, you are genius.

On a serious note: I broke up with my girlfriend of 4 years about 6 months ago. Her favorite comic is *The Walking Dead*. We used to read aloud this comic together; it's a memory I'll always be fond of. Thank you for giving us something that we could share together.

Here's to happy holidays to you and your family.

Sophea UK

Good to hear from you Sophea. Sorry to hear about the break-up.

Dear Walking Dead Crew,

All right, you beat me to it. Ever since I started reading your book (about six months now) I've suspected that the title didn't even refer to the zombies, and I was working up the nerve to actually write in and ask you guys about that, but then Issue 24 came out, and now my clever little insight looks so obvious and dated. Oh well!

I love how many of you write in... but don't seem to ever READ the letters columns. Bastards.

And what a lot of stuff has happened in the last few issues! We see relationships strengthen, and erode. We see Rick have a massive break-up with his new best friend and the shattering results. Alan dies, and frankly, considering he was pretty much looking for an excuse to give up for a while, I was surprised he made it as long as he did, poor guy. A mysterious lady shows up and screws everyone's relationships up! And now the group is looking to reorganize its hierarchy, such as it is. And the preview for the next issue...oh boy.

You guys must be insane to put out three comics in few weeks. It doesn't always take too long to write a script (depending on how much you need to edit and such) but I know that good art takes time. Man, did you have Charlie Adlard on stimulant the whole month or something? Great work, guys. Stellar.

It's actually more a case of Charlie drawing the book on a steady pace but all the other stuff that has to happen in order for the book to come out not happening on a steady pace. I'm trying to get things under control.

And now, because I don't think I have ever seen this question posed in any of your letter columns...what's your favorite Resident Evil game? Assuming you guys even play videogames, that is. I don't really have a favorite, myself. The first was almost intentionally awful but its remake rocked. The second, arguably the most popular, had interbranching story paths and a recurring, ever-mutating boss who was awesome, and cool environments. The third stole a lot of notes from *The Terminator* with its single, extra-powerful boss who simply would not stay dead and chased you through the whole game. The fourth...ah, the fourth doesn't even have ghoul-type zombies, (instead, it has creepy mind-control zombies) but it brings the series back into the original's promise of "playing a horror movie" and has terrific gameplay, and hard-to-kill chainsaw maniacs with potato sacks over their heads. For completely different types of horror in games you guys might want to check out the *Silent Hill* series (*Psychological Isolation*) or *Fatal Frame* series (*Scary, Ring-like ghosts you defeat with photography!*), but that's neither here nor there.

I personally have only played the first one for any length of time. I have 2 and 4 but haven't gotten around to doing much with them.

Thank you all for a very great comic book. As far as that "Go to issue 250" dream you guys have...if you make it that far, I'll be with you all the way. Good luck!

Sincerely,
Steve Ball

250? Why stop there?!

Mr. K,

Well, you've gone and done it again. My friend and I have been arguing over something that started with the latest issue of *The Walking Dead*, and once again we've become deadlocked. Hopefully, you can settle the matter once and for all.

Here we go again.

We know what happens when a zombie bites a person, but what happens when a person bites a zombie? I figure, food has to be a major factor at some point, canned goods and the vegetable garden won't last forever. At some point, those things could start to look

a little tasty, especially with careful preparation and enough rosemary. OR, maybe there's some vaccination effect to be gained from eating zombie flesh. Being exposed to the active toxin while perfectly healthy might develop an immunity. I just want to know.

My friend thinks otherwise. She believes that no one in such an environment would ever become crazy or desperate enough to eat a zombie, even if the only alternative was a live family member. She also believes that biting a zombie would be the same as being bitten by one: zombification. I don't see it that way, especially in the Walking Dead world, where everyone is already exposed to the Z-factor, but I'm going to defer to the master on this.

If you could make the time to answer our question, I'd really appreciate it. Thanks.

Sincerely,
Ryan Walsh & Marsha Endre

I'm glad you asked this question. I don't think anyone would ever think a zombie would be "good eating" at ANY point... not matter what. And that's a GOOD thing because if a human bites a zombie a Leprechaun hops out of the zombie's ass and rapes you. That's NO FUN AT ALL.

Dear Kirkman,

Wow!!! The newest issues are amazing. The cover sorta set me off though with the whole Rick's eye thing, but the "We are the walking dead thing!" that they said was just spine tingling. This is the first set of comics I have ever read in my life so you opened my eyes to a new world. You are the best damn writer ever. (By the way I love invincible!!). I have a few questions but first more complements. Your comics are the perfect blend of Sex, Gore, Horror, Action, Comedy, Mind Bending, and freaky situations. Not to mention I am a die hard zombie fan. Okay now the questions....

1.) Why dont you just make the goddamned movie already?!

Not up to me. I'm too busy with comics.

2.) Can I be an extra?!

I'm going to go ahead and say no. Sorry.

3.) Why are there not a lot of children zombies. Maybe one of the twins or someone can become one.

Little legs... they're always in the back of the horde.

4.) Why haven't the survivors just sat out on beach chairs and just blow out the zombies' friggin' brains already I mean what do they do for fun other than have sex?

That would waste bullets. They use far fewer bullets just lying around having sex.

5.) When will a new character come in or another one die.

I'm not giving anything away on the dying front... but we got a new character this very issue... a few actually.

6.) Have you had yourself put in as a zombie yet? I think you should.

I'm in this very issue. Look for me.

7.) You should go up to issue 500. Maybe 501. How high do you think you will go? I just love this series.

Right now I'm thinking issue 1000.

Those are just some of my questions. Just keep writing these amazing comics. I can't wait for the next.

Jason Rostovsky

Me neither.

P.S, This is my third time writing and I would appreciate it so much if it got in. please publish it.

I'll think about it.

Walking Dead is certainly one of the best horror based comics I have ever read.

1. In the Character bio pages at the back of the book. I have 3 suggestions. First one is to have the dead characters status written in bold caps. That would cause it to stand out more just how harsh this world of yours is. "Welcome to the Walking Dead world, Rick has a bullet with your name on it ready and waiting." Second suggestion is more of a correction. Carl has a typo in his paragraph. The word heavy. And third, well Allen is dead now, right? Still says "alive" in his bio (you ask for more critical emails, right?)

Everything will be fixed... eventually.

2. I can't wait for the alien issue. Will there be an Elvis sighting? Would be kinda cool if the aliens had been subjugated by the King after they abducted him. Have all the aliens wearing dazzling white sequin suits and with massive fake porkchop sideburns.

I was just sitting around thinking of something that would make it clearer this book has "jumped the shark" than aliens showing up... you've done my job for me. Elvis it is.

3. I have really enjoyed the prison storyline. I know that many are clamoring for them to leave, but the potential for stories isn't dwindling because they are in the prison. Although the roster is dwindling a bit.

The prison works... you people will see.

4. I look forward to the Marvel Zombies book, but I have to say that so far I have preferred your work on Walking Dead over the stuff you have done at Marvel. I will still be buying Walking Dead after you jump the shark with issue 75. (Apparently I am one of the only readers of TWD that hasn't jumped on with Invincible yet. I'll have to look into correcting that.)

What are you waiting for? The Invincible: Ultimate Collection contains the first 13 issues along with over 80 pages of extras for \$34.95! And volume 2 is out in March! Hop to it. And try Marvel Team-Up---it's SWEET!

5. Often the issue comes up about a movie or an animated series. I think a cable tv series would be great. But it would have to be from one of the big channels. HBO or Showtime. I appreciate the Sci-Fi channel, but they couldn't do some aspects of the series and in all honesty, there is about an 85%

chance that a Sci-Fi show is gonna totally suck ass. Battlestar Galactica being the rarity. I would hate to see TWD done poorly, it deserves to be done in a spectacular fashion.

We'll see. There's no news to report on that front.

6. I for one don't anticipate this series ending. I hope to still be reading new issues when I am 90. That puts you close to 700 issues, but I am confident you can keep the series fresh at least that long.

Thanks,
JimmyZ

I just turned 27 recently... so I've got at least five or so good years left in me. We'll see. I think Charlie's in for the long-haul... but he's already like 75 so we'll see.

DUDE!

I'm writing with a complaint. Not because you said that the complaints were bound to get printed, mind you. I doubt you even get that many. Anyway, I'm not so sure that the "We are the Walking Dead" bit in #24 really worked. As a long time reader, I know why you had it in there, but I think it should have been left to the editorial or letters page; having a character say it came across as a bit too cute. Although I suppose we could put it down to an after effect of Rick's injuries.

Like I say, I see what you're talking about--but I liked it.

The rest of the issue was great though, and Charlie A's art was even better than usual for some reason. He gives the characters such expressive faces. Great work.

That's because Charlie is totally awesome.

-Kelvin Green

p.s. I also really enjoyed Marvel Zombies and the story you did for the Amazing Fantasy book. When are the guys at the M going to let you take over the Avengers? Hm?

That's Brian's book. I think he's doing a fine job with it.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I wanted to write a quick letter to say congratulations on the spectacular run of The Walking Dead to date.

Quick question. Where is the line between what your zombies do and don't want to eat? If they want living flesh, would they stop to eat a steaming BM that was recently expelled from a human body? I would think it would have plenty of organic matter in it and it would smell like the insides of a human, which they don't seem to mind chomping through when they pull a body's entrails apart. I guess the main question here is would one of your zombies stop in their tracks to eat some poo?

Mason

If I answer this letter will there be a bunch of people with a hidden camera popping out of my closet? Seriously. WHAT. THE. FUCK.

I hope you're parents died before they had to see this.

Robert,

I wasn't going to buy the Image Holiday Special 2005, then Comic Book Resources ran an article stating a Walking Dead short story is included. You know what? You are a jerk. I had to buy it now. I bought it. I read it. Thank you for shining a holiday spotlight on Duane and his father; a great emotional, heartfelt story. Yes, folks, another fine episode from the world of (key ominous sounding music)...the Walking Dead.

Okay -- you are NOT a jerk.

Good save.

With how the story is progressing, how soon is Rick and the group's path going to cross with Duane and Dad? A long way off?

Sopheia Uk

Who knows if it will ever happen? It's a big world.

Greetings and Salutations!

This is not the first time I've ever written a comic book. This isn't even the first time I've loved a book enough to write in and proclaim how much I love it. However, this is the first time that I have a feeling that my letter might get read. You see, I like a great many books on the market today. A lot of horror, a lot of superheroes, pretty much everything. Almost.

You see, when the first X-Men movie hit and Marvel changed their X-Books (Not everything I read, but a big slug of it) I felt betrayed. These were not the mutants I loved anymore, and they certainly didn't look like them. The movie was great in it's own way, but to bring the tacky leather to the comics... and all that damn chest hair... I nearly cried. I almost stopped reading comics altogether. Some random DC books, G.I.Joe, and the now defunct Sojourn every month kept me (mostly) in the loop. I didn't really care all too much about a great story (Although G.I.Joe is a lifelong favorite and Sojourn was an amazing story which never received the end it deserved)

Then things started to change.

One fateful day, my brother in law (Who is also a comic fan, and a fan of yours now) and I were perusing the local shelves. While he was looking for back issues of some sort, I was content on grabbing some random books for reading in the think tank. I looked through the units, trying to find an appealing cover to sway my vote. Then I stumbled on to The Walking Dead #4. I looked at it and thought "The Walking Dead", eh? Let's see...". I picked up the book and skimmed through it. Black & white, nice. The artwork grabbed my eyes. Unfortunately, growing up with the rise of Image and their early standard of eye blistering unnecessary detail swayed me from many of their projects over the years. I didn't realize zombie horror (I am a zombie fanatic) could have these awesomely simplistic styles. I held on to that issue and looked at the back stock, seeing that there were some copies of 1-3 sitting there, going completely unnoticed. I quickly snatched these and said to my brother in law:

"Dude, this looks fuckin' awesome!"

That was the day that changed my comic reading life. I say reading because I collect on story. I have to enjoy the story or I just won't collect the book. It kind of bothers me when people just buy a book for a collection and don't read it. It seems like a waste of time and money.

When I first read those four books, I felt so insanely happy. Loving the zombie genre had never been this fulfilling. The Romero films are cinematic gems, and as far as anything in the genre goes, this book is on that same pedestal in my book. No other book or film has ever come close, and you guys just crashed that wall down. The story was so compelling. The characters were desperate and foolish, yet smart and snappy. Rick is a great lead character and his development so far has been so realistic and enthralling.

Soon I began a pull list at a friend's store which is now a mile long and I am a regular at all the local shops. I've recommended TWD to everyone I know, and with the exception of my 12 year old sister and my parents, they all love TWD and curse me for having all the back issues. Not only has TWD opened me back up to the vast comic world I had almost given up on, but creatively has influenced me to write more and give a much needed boost to my art.

So I thank everyone who has ever contributed to TWD. The book remains amazing and is nearly the only mainstay of my pull list (G.I. Joe and a few others have been there since the start as well). And yes, I have to be an asshole and have a few questions:

1) Mr. Kirkman, what are your top 5 albums? To write to or otherwise.

Uh, top five off the top of my head? Neil Young's Harvest, David Bowie's Let's Dance, Nick Cave's Let Love In, The Presidents Of The United States Of America's first album. But like I say, that's just off the top of my head.

2) Mr. Adlard, same question. Only for you it's "to draw to or otherwise".

Y'know, I really shouldn't do these at the last minute... then I could actually contact Charlie for stuff like this. The thing is... Charlie doesn't read these letters columns I'm sure. Let's see. Charlie--your mom's a wanker. That should get his attention. More news as it develops.

3) Will we ever see any more of Morgan and Duane Jones from the first issue? Unless I missed something, it seems like they could pop up at any moment...

Maybe one of these days. They were in the Image Christmas Special.

If I'm being a broken record kill me, but I keep reading about posters, toys and t-shirts. That would be one of the ten best ideas ever. Right after hygienic products and just before contraceptives. I know I would buy a shit load of toys of these guys.

So there's my two cents and the story of how I fell in love with your book.

Until Issue # 127 where Rick has a laser guided sword (Have you seen "Versus"? It's great!),

Your loyal fan-
Gareth Darko

My friend has been trying to get me to watch Versus for years... I've borrowed it from him at least three times and I never find time to watch it. One of these days though...

And now we've come to the new regular feature

of me trying to get you to buy all my other books. READ ON!

ITEM! Shipping the end of MARCH we'll have INVINCIBLE The Ultimate Collection VOLUME 2. It'll be a nice thick hardcover like the first one. It has issues 14-24 along with #0 and the Free Comic Book Day story and loads of extras. It'll retail for \$34.95

ITEM! SUPERPATRIOT: WAR ON TERROR #4 is finally coming out. Sorry for the long delay. It's been resolicited for MARCH and should be in stores toward the end of the month. It's our big finale... it's going to blow doors off--which considering how much time we spent putting the doors ON... should mean something to you.

ITEM! INVINCIBLE keeps going strong, if you like superheroes or people talking, fighting or crazy things happening to people who fight you'll dig it. Pick it up. Issue 30 should be out around the same time--or on the same DAY as this issue.

ITEM! BATTLE POPE is coming out regularly after a small snag with a worthless colorist. Issue 6 is on stands now and future issues should be following at a monthly rate, or the fur will fly. It's a fun series, written by me, drawn by Tony Moore & Friends and colors by aforementioned worthless colorist Val Staples. Ask for it by name.

ITEM! MARVEL TEAM-UP #19 is a kick ass story set in the Marvel Universe from 1991 featuring CABLE and WOLVERINE teaming up to fight THE MANDARIN. It features art by CORY WALKER and CLIFF RATHBURN and is going to be colored by VAL STAPLES. Ask for it by name. It's also a prelude to the big "FREEDOM RING" storyline that runs through Team-Up 20-24 featuring art by ANDY KUHN so pick it up.

ITEM! My second issue of ULTIMATE X-MEN should be out by now. Featuring art by TOM RANEY & BEN OLIVER. It's a blast working on these characters and I'm hoping the fun I'm having shows. I've got a lot of cool stuff planned for my run, so check it out.

ITEM! Unless you've been living under a rock you've heard about MARVEL ZOMBIES my mini-series with SEAN PHILIPS over at Marvel. The first issue just got a third printing and issue 4 should be on the shelves when this hits so be on the lookout--it's CRAZY FUN.

ITEM! Almost every WEDNESDAY you can swing over to COMIC BOOK RESOURCES (www.cbr.cc) and read my BUY MY BOOKS column. It features jpegs and all kinds of inside info on my upcoming books--that you should buy!

See you cats here again next month right? You better believe it!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Welcome to issue 29.

No time for love this month... gotta dive right into the mail.

Here goes!

Hi again, Kirkman!

Just read issue 26... You're seriously starting to piss me off... Here's the list:

1. You show us a helicopter in 25, then I breeze through issue 26 looking forward to finding out who's in the chopper. And at the end of the issue, I'm no closer to an answer! Damn you, Kirkman!!

I gotta keep the fish on the line, man.

2. More Rathburn back covers?!? You can't keep doing this to me! Rathburn's zombies are so cool that a simple back cover is not enough! If you're going to keep doing this, you're going to have to give Rathburn a fill in issue or a one-shot or something. I can't handle getting this little taste each month and nothing more!

Cliff is working on something non-Walking Dead related right now... he's pretty busy. After that--who knows.

3. That two-page spread between issues 22-23 is a pretty cool idea, even if you did rip it off from Larsen. I didn't even notice it until one of the letters in this issue mentioned it. I went back and checked it out, and it's real cool. But it pisses me off because I know what you're doing, you corporate sell-out whore. The way it's printed, we can't really see what the full spread looks like without folding a comic in half, which you know most people won't do. Now, you'll print the trade with the spread intact, so we need to buy that to see the whole thing. I guess that's Kirkman - always trying to make a buck for "the man" at the expense of his poor fans...

That's not it at all. It's all an effort Erik Larsen... he is the publisher at Image now, you know. Although, I will admit... the extra sales don't hurt.

4. It feels like it's been forever since the last issue. You're probably not behind, but you were putting out more than just an issue a month, so I'm getting used to it... Make this book bi-monthly already! I bet you, Charlie, and Cliff are all wasting a third of your day sleeping when you could be writing./drawing/toning! Just get some Red Bull or Rockstar or something, and get your lazy asses back to work! Sleep's overrated anyway (why else would I be writing this at midnight on a Sunday when I have to get to work in the morning?)

We'll do what we can. We have lost a week or two here and there in the schedule... starting in August, we'll be on track, monthly, like clockwork from here on out. And you can quote me on that... until we blow it.

5. I never even noticed the "Previously In..." section on the inside cover... Good thing you mentioned it in the letters or I never would have seen it. Couldn't you make it stand out more so it would actually be useful to me?!

Or, y'know... you could LOOK at the credits page or something. I can't read the books FOR you, man.

OK, so that's a weak list, but it's better than your normal "the book's great, keep up the good work" letter you usually get, right? Those are just boring...

Tell me about it.

I'm really looking forward to finding out who was in the helicopter and who the group of people were that beat Rick,

Michonne, and Glenn to it. It's interesting that another group could have been that close to the prison without ever stumbling upon it... Of course, knowing your writing, it'll probably take months for you to answer those questions, because you just LOVE to piss me off!

Anyway, the book's great. Keep up the good work!

Jim Amato

Thanks, I'm going to get back to pissing you off now. I LOVE IT!

Robert Kirkman,

This letter is more of a double thank you. First let me tell you a little about myself. I'm 26 and I play in a rock-pop band called Spitalfied. I tour about nine months out of the year and I am never home. So "comic book" Wednesday is a bit difficult for me sometimes. This is where the double thank you comes in. My favorite comic book store, Chicago Comics is two blocks from my apartment in the city. I go there every time I'm home and usually pick up a couple of trades before I leave for a tour. I brought up Invincible volume 1 and they said it was "amazing" and "you'll be back for two because that's when the shit hits the fan". It was their recommendation and high praise for you that convinced me to pick it up. Well, an hour later I was back. While I was picking up number two they told me of your other works including The Walking Dead. A week later I find myself owning all volumes of Invincible and The Walking Dead. So Kudos to those guys at Chicago Comics.

Indeed--thanks bunches, guys.

Second thank you goes to you and all working on this book. What a character you have in that Rick Grimes. I mean the transition that he has gone through since issue one. You can see it on his face, the way he walks and talks. With the work of Moore/Adlard and your stories, man his guy has substance. Too many times I find that the characters in some of the books I am reading, stay the same while only their situations and surroundings change. That is not the case here. And that's why I'm writing this to you and everyone that works on The Walking Dead. To tell you the truth I never ever thought about writing a letter to the editor, or creator of my favorite books until today. So again THANK YOU Chicago Comics and THANK YOU Robert Kirkman.

Newly acquired fan of your work,
Tj

No, thank you.

Greetings Zombie-lovers,

I've been reading the monthly since issue ten, so I've been following your letter column for a while, and there are a couple of topics I'd like to weigh in on: First, I know you're sick of people asking you what you thought of Land of the Dead - so I'm not going to - but I do gave an observation to make; one of the joys of the zombie genre is seeing real, recognisable people under pressure react to the breakdown of society. Personally, I find the idea of the world abruptly ending (aside from a handful of survivors) fascinating.

One reason Land (and Day) is less regarded than Dawn and Night is that they lack the resonance of witnessing the slow collapse of civilization. Land skipped to a point where zombies are a fact of life, and lost some of the immediacy that made

Dawn so poignant. One reason I love this book so much is that it's unfolded from the very beginning of an epidemic, so the people we're following are still grounded in a familiar world. The Walking Dead captures the 'What if this happened right now?' aspect of Romero's films in a way the later sequels didn't (don't get me wrong, I loved Land and Day, but neither give me the queasy, exhilarating sense of unease I get when I watch the opening half hour of Dawn). In your November '05 letter column you mentioned how tempted you were to have a helicopter with a pregnant blonde and a black police officer land on the prison roof - I'd sell you my soul if you did that (if not, it's available on e-bay). I mean, nobody else is ever going to use those characters. Even if it were an ambiguous cameo, it'd be a nod to the genre that inspired this comic. I'm sure there are ways to do it without leaving yourself legally vulnerable - I'm reminded of the 'Leonard' the Duck switcheroo pulled by Gerber in the Savage Dragon/Destroyer Duck one-shot a few years back. Given that you're Enk Larsen's bitch (and who wouldn't want to be?), I'm sure you're aware of the massive 'Fuck you!' to Marvel that I'm referring to. I've got my fingers crossed that the downed helicopter in issue 26 may have been carrying a black cop and a knocked-up woman. Of course, you may take the higher path and stick with your own characters, but I still hope you indulge your inner geek.

I like to think the heads that The Governor were putting in fish tanks this issue--the ones from the people from the helicopter--are that of a black police officer and a blonde woman... but their origins, are a tad different... but that's about as close as I'm going to get to using those characters illegally.

Some people seem to be complaining that the story is getting too soap opera-ish lately, and lamenting the lack of zombie action. I'd just like to say that one of my favourite things about this book is that the zombies don't have to be front and centre every issue for it to be a great read. I'm as big a fan of hatchet-wielding, samurai-sword swinging zombie-smooching as the next reader, but it's the characters I come back for. Besides, all that slow-burn led to the fight between Rick and Tyreese, a showdown rich with drama because of the time taken to build a believable friendship between the two. I was shocked that it went as far as it did, but I still found it believable, and I can't wait to see what happens next between those guys. As far as I'm concerned, the pacing and focus of this book is perfect; without the quieter lulls, the action would feel pretty empty.

Thanks.

I would like to ask, why haven't the survivors discussed their theories about why the dead are walking around? I know that you (as a writer) aren't interested in exploring the origins of the zombies (yet), but our guys must have discussed it. I know that they probably talked about it a lot before Rick showed up in Atlanta, but somehow I think it'd still be a hot topic (especially with no TV). I guess I just want to see if anyone comes up with a reason as cool as 'When there's no more room in hell, the dead will walk the earth...'

It's been mentioned at least once... with Andrew. I imagine most of the characters talked about it before Rick arrived in issue 3. And Rick has other things occupying his mind.

I have no list of numbered questions for you to answer, since you seem to be busy enough. I'll just say thanks for producing such a great book - I have a feeling that years from now, The Walking Dead might be spoken of with the reverence of the original trilogy - y'know, the way people first looked at Sopranos as a knock-off of Analyse This, and then quickly realised that it was actually a genre-defining masterpiece.

Take it easy,
Paul Doncaster, England

P.S. I laughed my ass off when I saw what you did to the Silver Surfer in Marvel Zombies (so I guess you owe me a new ass).

The ass is in the mail.

P.P.S. I think Michonne is a spy working for another bunch of survivors, that this other bunch of survivors took the people from the plane. But then again, I'm a cynical fucker.

Michonne is not a spy.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

You, my friend, are a miracle worker. You got me to do two things that I swore I would never do.

The first was to end my boycott of Image comics, I swore that after the whole Todd McFarlane / Neil Gaiman lawsuit over the Miracleman rights that I would never buy anything with Todd's name attached to it. The second was to write into a comic book. I'm a 33 yr. old comic book fan, I have been a serious collector since I was 16, as my wife will tell you I take my comics very seriously. One of my all time favorites series was Miracleman (just

to let you know that The Walking Dead just knocked it down to number 2 on my list) unfortunately when Neil Gaiman took over for Alan Moore, he was unable to finish it because Eclipse Comics went under, leaving us readers wondering if he was going to be able to finish the series. I'm not going to bore you with all the details (I'm sure you know more about it than me anyhow) but I sided with Neil on everything, and when Todd tried to bring Miracleman back in Hellspawn, I just about lost it. I new that Neil was trying to finish the story he was trying to tell, and well I just thought that Todd was being a prick about it. Well I am also a huge zombie fan, I can remember watching Dawn of the Dead when I was about 8 or 9 and just being amazed. It wasn't until I saw the remake that I became hook and all things zombies. Could you imagine my dismay when I heard about this book, after much soul searching I decide to buy the first trade paperback and read it twice in one sitting. I couldn't get back to the comic book store fast enough to buy the other 3. What an amazing series! Next to Miracleman, I have never felt so... I don't have a word for it.... satisfied after reading all 4 trades. I just finished issue 25 and 26 and let me tell you I will never miss an issue from here on out. I also look forward to picking up some more titles by Image now that I broke down and bought TWD.

Image is a fantastic company, of which Todd McFarlane is part--a large part, but he's not affiliated with this book or any book from Image Central (I.E. non Top Cow and non Todd McFarlane Productions). I will say that from my experience, Todd is a swell guy and there are two sides to every story. I refuse to take sides because I don't know the whole story.

Number 2, I have never felt the need to write into any comic book that have read until now, I don't even really know what to say, your book floors me, the story lines are awesome, the characters are very believable, I even prefer the black and white to color with this book.(the B/W really gives it a feeling of despair, desperation, and loneliness.) Well thank you for your time and I hope to see this letter in print in an upcoming issue, one last thing, could you please recomend 3-5 titles published by Image that I could pick up, I enjoy zombies, but also the superhero genre as well as books like Y- the last man. Again, thank you for what you do, you have got to have the best job in the world

Fan for Life
Erik Porter

Well, I won't recommend Invincible and Battle Pope (my other books) because that would seem too cheap. But they're good books and if you like my work on this book you might just like those as well... that's "INVINCIBLE" and "BATTLE POPE" more about them can be found at the end of this letters column. Now, five OTHER books you might like at Image?

1. GIRLS
2. GODLAND
3. NOBLE CAUSES
4. SEA OF RED
5. FELL

Dear Image Creator,
I apologize in advance for forgetting to recommend YOUR book. It's not because I dislike it, or think it's sub par. It's possible I just didn't think the content would jive with someone who likes TWD and superheroes as the letter writer mentioned. PVP is a fantastic book... but maybe this reader wouldn't like it. I'll be sure to mention your book next time. Promise.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

Firstly, I want to say I'm a big fan of your work! I do have a question though. Several of my friends and I spent \$100.00 on the Walking Dead Slipcase HC, which was beautiful by the way, and were concerned to see a new hardcover format of issues 1-12 in the latest Previews. Maybe I'm jumping the gun here but does this mean there will not be a volume 2 hardcover slipcase?

Yours truly;
Big Mike

THERE WILL BE A SECOND SLIPCASE VOLUME. I PROMISE. We have to get to issue 48 first though. The 12-issue hardcovers will be cheaper and have less stuff--and WILL NOT be limited. I want a volume 2 slipcase... so I promise there will be one. MAYBE Christmas 2007... but maybe Christmas 2008... we'll see. But there WILL be one.

Hey Mr. Kirkman,

Hello and best wishes. About two months ago I read Invincible #1 and the Walking Dead through the Image site's digital comic format. I really liked them and had to find out what happened next. (Their ploy worked on me) Anyway, so I went straight to Amazon and bought the hardback collection volume one of Invincible and the 1st TPB of TWD. Wow! This pretty much blew my mind. So I went and bought up the back issues of Invincible and the rest of the TPB's of TWD and am now current.

They just saw the helicopter.

The problem is, now that I'm up to date, I have to wait month by month to get these little single issue tidbits. This sucks. I think this qualifies as an addiction. You see, I am a doctor and I have been sneaking into the call room at the hospital to read these things. I've been getting them in the mail, sneakily hiding them from my wife so she doesn't know that I'm spending money on this stuff. (sounds similar to a dope problem, huh). Funny thing, I've bought two of TWD trades at Barnes & Nobles and each time the check out person said something like "Good choice. This stuff is great!"

Bottom line; I'm writing this to wish you congratulations on making a living doing something you like and that a lot of other people really like. Not everyone is that lucky. Also, as your career moves forward into bigger \$ projects, I hope you don't completely leave this format behind. Another thing. When the movies start coming, keep complete creative control. Don't let them water your stuff down. I can't wait to see them.

Another fan,
Jason

Yeah, sorry you have to put up with the monthly grind now. That's just the nature of the business.

As far as abandoning this book goes... all I have EVER wanted to do since I was like... ten years old is work in comics. All I've EVER wanted to do since I started working in comics is have LONG runs on books, getting to tell broad, over-arching story arcs... and getting to stay on a book for years and tell a full story.

So now that I have that with Invincible and The Walking Dead... I'm not going ANYWHERE. I want to see both books reach at least 100... but I've got no plans to go anywhere on either book after that.

Mr. Kirkman,

Thanks for proving my theory. I've long held the contention that zombies make everything better. Be it video games, movies, or comic books, I see few things that couldn't be improved by the living dead. Bored with Super Mario Bros.? Understandable. You wouldn't be bored if you were jumping on the heads of the shuffling undead instead of waddling mushrooms. Movies? How much more enjoyable would Titanic have been if Leo DeCap would have come back from his watery grave to feast on the brainpan of his darling Rose?

I like the cut of your jib, fella.

Now, in the midst of a cultural zombie revival, I find myself increasingly impatient for the next issue to come out. Thanks for that. It's the ongoing zombie saga that could never be provided by any other medium. It's not a Nintendo game, it's not a movie, it's my comic collection that's been vastly improved by the presence of zombies. And specifically, the batch that you've cooked up and the lives you've shown us that have been affected by them. There are other books with zombies in them on the shelf, but your team has created a new standard for the undead. Congratulations, and thanks again.

Loyally yours,
Gavin Napier

Thanks for writing.

Dear Kirkman,

Holy crap. Issue 26 is the issue I've been waiting for and there's more to come. Helicopters crashing, random zombie attacks, polygamy, soap opera goodness. Woo-hoo. I love it when I can't predict what's going to happen. Never thought Carol would ask to marry Rick and Lori. Good times. Got the whole Lost thing going with the others in the area. Feel like I should say more, but you need that space in the back to plug your other books, make fun of Bendis, and print those bios... Heh. Oh, and I spilled water all over this comic and the back page fused with my Tommy Boy DVD box. Just thought I should share that.

Questions:

1. Ok, I convinced you to put up Invincible for a Heroclix set. Now how about The Walking Dead for Horrorclix?

We'll see.

2. I've been selling people the Invincible trades, but there are no letters. Bendis includes some letters in his Powers trades. You are better than Bendis, right?

Yes, I'm MUCH better than Bendis. That's why I put stuff you actually want to SEE in the trades instead of mountains of ego stroking letters you'll never read. I swear... that Bendis... he was so much better before he cut his hair.

3. Romero might be making a sequel. What do you think? What would you like to see?

A direct continuation from Land of the Dead. I'm looking forward to it.

4. Have you seen Dead and Breakfast? Such a great movie. Has zombies, but not the Romero breed. Good stuff. They do Thriller.

Not yet... maybe some day.

5. Zombie Gorillas? Already been done. The band Gorillaz rocks. They begin their newest album with music from Dawn of the Dead. A song from another album is nothing but Dead film sound bites.

That's right.

6. Did you know that when you have a tickle in your throat, scratching your ear to cause small throat spasms makes it better?

I'll certainly try that next time.

I'm pumped with the new direction in this book and Invincible. Tellin you man, Walking Dead Horrorclix. Chance to kill Allen all over again. Looking forward to the new MTU stuff as well. Haven't read Ultimate X-Men, but I promised you I would. I'll tell you what I think.

Kirkmaniac,
Chris Pitts

You better get on that Ultimate X-Men bandwagon soon--that book NEEDS the readers!

Mr. Kirkman,

Issue 27. Dear God, where do I start? I have been reading TWD since issue #1. Many times your book has made my jaw drop, but nothing can compare to the last page of #27. I actually yelled "Holy !@#\$\$\$!" which made my dog jump about 20 feet!

Really? You shoulda really screamed at the end of 28.

How will Rick handle this situation? Something tells me that all three of them don't make it out in one piece. Michonne looks to be able to take care of herself, but is Glen up to the task? It also was a nice touch to see that the 3 of them were smart enough not to divulge the prison camp. Will the truth slip out? Much as I would like to see a Living vs Living battle, I'm not sure I want to see the prison survivors go against what appears to be a professional army.

This book continues to get better every month. It is great to finally get some new characters, and we will hopefully get to see what/how they have survived. The last page was actually terrifying to me! Dr Logan and Millard Roush would definitely approve!

This is without a doubt the best title on the market right now. The dialogue is believable, and the story is really starting to pick up speed now. I have tried to get others aboard the TWD, and my fiancé Jenn is absolutely nuts about this book as well.

Have you had a chance to check out "Escape from the living dead?" It's not as bad as I thought it would be, and miles better than "Toe Tags" by Romero. My local shop, Harrison's in Salem, Massachusetts, has a whole wall devoted to horror comics right now, but they tell me that TWD is without a doubt the best selling title right now. It's always good to see a true fan make good, Robert!

I haven't checked that book out... I'll probably buy the TPB.

Marvel Zombies kicks all kind of ass also, but TWD is still my favorite. Please, no matter what the "Big guys" offer you, please keep writing this one, please???

Until next time,
Phil Stevens

Read what I said above. I'm not going anywhere. And neither are Charlie or Cliff as far as I know.

Robert,

While working today, I had several questions regarding Walking Dead. Several questions are silly, others are out of mild curiosity. At any rate, here they are:

1. Will you ever reveal if the zombie apocalypse is localized or globalized?

We'll be getting more hints of that as the series goes on. My lips are sealed.

2. Does the title "Walking Dead" exclude the living dead disabled? I.e. Will we ever see zombies in wheelchairs?

Yes. I'm very hateful toward the handicapped. I will be doing a "The Rolling Dead" spin off title as soon as I'm washed up and desperate for cash... in August.

3. Will you please, please have the following character exchange: Character one: Man, things can't get much worse. I don't how we can go on... Character Two: The drummer from Def Leopard only has one arm, he did.

That was in issue one, wasn't it?

4. Who would win in a fight to the death, the drummer from Def Leopard or Lance Armstrong?

That drummer who's name you (and I) can't bother to look up on the internet... for sure.

5. Have you ever been angry that you've killed off a character though it was demanded in the storyline? Which one?

I would have liked to have kept them ALL around for at least a little longer... but when they gotta go they gotta go. That's what this book is about. I think keeping Amy around would have been fun. Who DOESN'T miss Jim. Shane could have mucked things up longer. I probably shouldn't have killed SO MANY of Hershel's kids. It's so unrealistic to have that guy even forming sentences... Allen and Donna were fun. Donna in particular could have been cool to have around... but sadly... they're all dead.

Got a customer. That's it for now.

-Thanks,
Andrew

Thanks for writing.

Dear Walking Dead team,

I stopped buying comics when I was fourteen years old. Ghost Rider started to suck, I discovered girls, and started going to lollapalooza. I hadn't really thought too much about comics for the past twelve years except when I had to lug the shoeboxes full of them that I still had every single time I moved. Even then, everytime the thought was "damn, I really need to get rid of these things." Things changed at the beginning of last summer. I was getting tattooed for nine hours in two days, and as exciting as my tattoo artist is to talk to it got just a little tiring. While hunched over with a needle jabbing into my back for hours on end I noticed a book on his cluttered shelf of art-books in front of me titled The Walking Dead. As he and I are both horror movie fanatics I knew that it would be interesting, although I must say I was skeptical because it was in comic form (Ghost Rider really disappointed me by issue 26; deep scar.)

Well now here it is nine months later and that first trade has given a (re)birth to an old habit. I am a full-fledged comic book nerd once again. The book blew me away immediately as a literary accomplishment and a comic. It made me ask Lance (the tattoo artist) if other comics were out there as good. He said "I'll bring you the other two trades tomorrow." After I devoured those I immediately went out to my local comic shop and pestered the owner into telling me other books that were as good as yours. Of course Walking Dead and Invincible are my two favorites that he recommended but I'm a big fan of Brian Vaughn's work and Rick Remender. It's sad that Tony Moore had to leave you but the guy's doing amazing things with Fear Agent and also Exterminators. **(I agree... and I love working with Charlie, so it was all for the better.)**

Anyway, I'm rambling but I JUST finished, like minutes ago, issue 27 and I must say its my favorite Issue in a while. I was a little disappointed that 25 didn't get the special treatment Invincible got for its 25, but this one makes up for it in the ohmigod I have to know what's happening next dept. I have three comments/questions:

1) Why weren't Rick, Glen, and Michonne concerned with finding any markings on the helicopter? They were curious about it being military or television etc...as it was flying, but no mention of its origin was posed when they reached the crash site, don't know why this bugs me so much, but...you know?

Uh... they were distracted by the footprints? I suck as a writer? Pick one.

2) Glad to see the arrival of the inevitable "outsiders" that would have to ruin everything great that has been achieved (although the definition of great would have to be stretched) a'la the bikers of Dawn, or the rednecks of Night, the soldiers of 28 days...(sorry to bring that movie up) I keep expecting Andrew to pop back up since his swift departure after Dexter's death. Not that this plot development is derivative at all, its exciting and seems to serve as a way for the characters to realize that the world that has been destroyed might have been destroyed for a reason, people are bastards.

The new group will add a lot to the book. Fun and interesting times are ahead.

3) I don't think I've laughed harder in a long time than at your responses to the letters in 27 about poo eating zombies or "what would happen if a human bit a zombie" debate, wow if you printed those letters I'll feel lame if I don't see mine (wink wink.)

It's taken care of.

To wrap it up, thanks a lot for getting me into comics again, though my wallet is crying for mercy, especially after buying that hardcover deluxe madness, keep up the fantastic work. It depresses me that you are only 27 (my age) I am a lazy lazy person.

Thanks.
Adam Mitchell.

Don't feel bad. I'm sure I'll probably die before you do with all this stress I put myself through. You'll win in the end. You'll see.

Kirkman!

Woot! I'm so excited! You wrote "Charlie's in for the long haul!!! Hoorah! I love the long haul! The best comics are when the writer and artist stay on for a few years. I felt reluctant about TWD until the third trade came out. Didn't want to invest in a story just to see it pawned off to hired writers. I cut you some slack though, I held off of Savage Dragon until issue 75 before I started buying it.

Is that the theme of this issue? I'M NOT GOING TO QUIT. NO ONE OTHER THAN ME WILL EVER WRITE THIS BOOK... until I totally sell out. But seriously, I don't plan to ever leave. The book will be cancelled long before I feel like letting someone else write it.

Ooh speaking of! I've an idea, y'know how Larsen is on like issue one-hundred twenty-something of Savage Dragon? If he keeps going at his pace, and you keep going at yours you could totally beat him to issue 200! That would be AWESOME! You should bet him some money on that!

I would love to do that. Just to stick to old baldy (that's what we call him around the Image office). I tell you what... I'll give it a shot.

I want you to know how much I appreciate how well you manage to balance the book. Sometimes sci-fi/fantasy/horror starts off with so many ideas and then disappoints by failing to deliver on them. You've done a masterful job of pulling in the reins to keep it interesting and yet containable.

Your reader until you stop,
Mahdroo McCaleb

P.S. I was horror struck when Michonne said "when we get to wherever it is we're going...it's just a matter of time before they catch up to us and the longer our trip the more there will be." That made me imagine Atlanta's millions of zombies surrounding the prison. The thought of vast herds of zombies sweeping the country side was terrifying (is that what the people in the Helicopter were looking at?)

Only the shadow knows! Or... Only time will tell! Your pick.

First off, I work at Wal-mart and I freaking love that there is a shot of one in the background in issue #27! LOVE IT! Sometimes I feel like we're all zombies working there! Anyway, no entertainment means feeding strangers to zombies? That's really messed up!!! Love the book and thanks again to the whole team that works on it!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

I worked at Wal-Mart in high school. Tony Moore worked in the Wal-Mart pharmacy (same Wal-Mart) shortly after high school. Wal-Mart REPRESENT! I don't think Charlie or Cliff ever worked in a Wal-Mart.

Kirkman,

Not much to say that isn't usually said in over 7 pages of fun mail (I READ EM)! Likewise my first time I HAVE ever written in EVER to anything. I started on the Walking Dead late in it's existence, my first issue being #19 where we are introduced to Michonne. Crazy issue to jump into but best \$3.70 CANADIAN I ever spent. Didn't bother with the trades at the time because rumour was swirling of the massive 24 issue hardcover (shout-outs to Darryl at Cyber City in Toronto, Ontario, who gave it to me for American Cover! Customer 4 life!). When the omnibus arrived I spent that entire Wednesday reading the goddamn thing and there is nothing I can say that hasn't been said aside keep 'em coming. But wow the wait between 25 and 26 seemed like years. What was the actual wait period? Seemed longer then the wait between Ultimates 9 and 10! But looks like your getting back on track with 2 issues coming out monthly twice in the next 3 months! Now on to the customary questions:

1.) Carol seems about to crack. Is she really that lost without a man that she'd be willing to go into a 3 some marriage? Maybe its a clever scheme so she has an excuse to get it on with Rick and not feel guilty about pulling a Tyreese on Lori's ass.

We'll see. She's pretty nutty these days. I don't think it's just because she doesn't have a man, though.

2.) I've heard a big change is coming in the next few issues. Is the big change going to involve Lori's baby? With new characters coming out of issue 27 I can see how no one has thought about it yet but if something is wrong with Lori's baby I can see a rift forming between Rick and Lori with Carol in the middle.

The baby is coming... but not just yet.

3.) What do zombies do for entertainment when there aren't any humans around to munch on?

Racquet ball.

4.) Last but not least ATTEND A TORONTO CON! We got 2 coming up here April 23rd and 28-30th. I want you to sign my Walking Dead Omnibus. Plus we got lots of donut shops everywhere! I'll bring you a dozen. Just print me a list of your favorites.

I'm sure I'll make it to Canada eventually.

Hope you print this letter and you need to take over Ultimate Spider-man. I'll be waiting for that day! Zombie King Kirkman, fan for life here.

Sincerely,
Mike Somma (To many fucking Mike's. Needa name change).

Bendis is scared of what I'll do with that book. He doesn't want me to make him look bad. Some day, though... some day...

Kirkmanotron!

You've really shaken things up with the introduction of the second "haven", and in a nicely unexpected way. I can't wait to see where things go from here, and the sense that the "Governor" and his boys are going to screw everything up for our favourite survivors is hard to shake. Even if they never find out about the prison, the tension is always going to be there, knowing that they're just down the road.

Speaking of which, surely someone in the town knows about the prison, seeing as it's within easy traveling distance? Or did they last check on it before Rick and the gang moved in?

The group in Woodbury is very large... some people don't even know others. Also, Governor is not exactly making it public knowledge how they're getting their supplies. Not everyone in the camp is a rotten person. Also, most of the people in town aren't from that specific area of Georgia.

If I moved 40 miles South in Kentucky... where I have lived all my life. I would have NO IDEA what was five miles in any direction without doing some serious exploring... and that would take resources I might not have.

Also, the little chat with Lori highlighted some interesting questions about morality and the like, beyond the "kill or be killed" stuff the men folk are always going on about. I wonder if you'll be delving into similar questions about what's right and what's wrong with the Governor and his enclave. It would be a shame, I think, to take the easy route and broadly portray them as cackling villains.

Another great issue, Mr K.
Keep it up!

I'm trying to make the "villains" of this book as three dimensional as possible. Let me know if I succeed.

Mr Kirkman,

I just want to say thank you. You rock man. The Walking Dead is my favorite comic book. You make me dream! So here are a few questions, after reading The Walking Dead 27 :

1) Do you have an idea of how the story will end? I mean is it a happy end?

I do have a rough idea... I'd rather not say if it's happy or sad.

2) Will we see Duane and his son again (beside the Holiday Special) ?

We'll see. They're still out there somewhere... but it's a big world.

3) D'you think the characters will travel outside the US ?

Probably not. That would be hard to do given where they are geographically.

4) I want to know what happened to Tyreese when he was in the basketball field! How did he survive? And will we know what is going on in his head since his daughter died?

He went crazy and killed a shit load of zombies, almost in a trance due to the stress he was going through. It could happy, these things are slow and are probably not well balanced. The odds were against him... but it's not impossible that anyone could do that if they were in good shape and had the temperament to do what he did. We'll be hearing more from Tyreese as we go on... he's got a lot on his mind.

Thanks for everything! Hope you'll stay with the book till the end!
Francois

Please print me, print me, i'm so okay with that!

Your wish is my command.

Just wanted to compliment you on a story that not only delivers

characters that you care about but also the action and of course horror that work very nicely instead of just overloading the reader on gore and violence as a sole means to keep them interested, and to all the people that think nothing but shoeless hicks come out of Kentucky you have once again proved them wrong. It's all around a great story and can't wait until the next issue.

Jonathan Poole

Have you SEEN me? If I don't qualify as a "shoeless hick" I don't know WHO does!

Dear Kirkman, Adlard & Rathburn,

Bravo, my friends, THE WALKING DEAD is now back on track. I just read and re-read that final page in issue 27 and it STILL scares the hell out of me. Wow!
I can't remember the last time I've felt so anxious to read the next issue of TWD. Psycho modern-day savages vs. our heroes vs. the zombies? This is gonna be harrowing (but fun).

Peaks and valleys people. This book will always have slower character driven issues from time to time .. that's the design of the book. To have four slow issues of character development and to think the book has "gone of track" is insane. You've got to care about these guys before their guts get ripped out.

Cheers,
Dann Lennard
Sydney, Australia

P.S. Kirkman, are you reading all the zombie anthologies being put out by BOOM? They're pretty entertaining.

I've read a couple. They're not bad.

P.P.S. I've particularly enjoyed the past two issues where you've interspersed the main storyline with the ongoing soap opera sub-plots in the prison. Nice one, fellas. :D

Thanks.

Dear Kirkman,
What can I say that hasn't already been said? TWD is phenomonal! The combination of your superb writing and Charlie and Cliff's art beats the hell out of just about every comic out there. But everyone already knows these things, I see them all the time on your letters page. Seriously man, I'm running out of ways to kiss your ass. Back to the letters page though, you said in Steve Ball's letter how you love how so many people write in but don't ever read the letters columns. I just wanted to say I'm a devoted fan of reading the letters like that one where that dude wrote in and said some stuff and you said some stuff back. Man, that was gold! I'm still catching up to Invincible and haven't even started on Brit yet, but I'll get there. I do have a question (and it's not even a TWD question, but I'm gonna be a total dick and use up this space while I have it), will you be doing anything for Marvel's upcoming Civil War? It would be make sense for something to be thrown into a MTU issue seeing as how that book is written for the purpose of throwing heroes together, and it's most fun to see them when they don't agree. Thanks for the great stories!

Mike Parks

I'm doing "The Irredeemable Ant-Man" which will spin out of Civil War... otherwise I'll just be watching from the sidelines. Marvel Team-Up is focusing on other stuff during the crossover.

So far the issues I've read of this book have been #1, and #'s 24-27. There are some things I wonder if you have ever covered in the endless dialogue of the issues I haven't read:

What do Rick and co. think God is doing about the whole alien zombie thing? Do they ever talk about God at all? For example, "How could God let this happen??!!"

It's been mentioned briefly. Hershel is religious.

The issue of entertainment was brought up by 'Governor' in issue #27; what DO the regular cast do for entertainment? Besides reading and sleeping around, of course. Somebody must have a deck of cards right? What about food? They live in a prison...what happens when they run out of food? Go traipsing off to the woods to kill some deer??

Probably. Right now the prison is still well stocked with government issue canned goods. They'll be fine for a little while at least... but they WILL run out of food eventually, and this book will show that. That's the fun part of this book for me. We will eventually get around to everything.

And here's an idea. Maybe it's naive, or you've already covered it, but still, here goes: why not just have Rick and his band kill all the zombies--if that's possible, I mean--then repopulate the Earth??? Sure it would take generations, even the killing part, but--ya know?

It is not possible. Zombies outnumber people like 1000

to 1 or so right now... and there are FAR more people alive than we've shown.

At any rate, I do kinda dig this series and have started reading it regularly. I don't even mind the black and white any more (Rick has brown hair right?). I was fooled by the Governor and co. and their intentions too; at least until the next to the last page. And, gee, "how will they get out of this one??"

Letter Hacks is a bit vague for a letter column, really. Is there such a thing as a Dead Letter?? Sounds familiar. My favorite characters? Michonne...the blonde woman, don't know her name yet. but there are a lot of kids at the prison—how did They survive so long on the outside?? And how long has it BEEN anyway? A few years or more, like in real life?

Cya.

The kids had parents protecting them. You really should pick up the TPBs. I'm not looking this up (I do keep all this stuff written down) but it's been about 8 months since the zombie plague started. It's May or June or so and the "plague" started in October. So not even a year has passed, which is why Lori is still pregnant.

First off, I know a hundred other people have said it before, but I have to thank you for getting me back into comic books. Hell, I can even get my girlfriend to go to Comic Book World to pick up issues for me since I got her addicted to TWD too.

Now, I hate to do this. Especially considering this is my first letter, but when I was reading through the first issues again I came across the part at the farm where the family had all killed each other. Considering what happened to Chris and Julie, why didn't this family turn into zombies? I really don't mean to be a bastard and ask a question like this, but I really had to ask you. Unlike most fan boys, I will not be bothered by it if you just say that you didn't decide that normal dead would turn into zombies until later, and if anyone complains just tell them to shove it.

Anyways thanks for the great comic, keep up the good work.

Chris Johnston

If you'll notice... EVERY SINGLE dead, non-moving body that has appeared in this book since the beginning has had a head injury destroying the brain. That family in particular was shot in the head by the father and then he shot himself. Look again... this was all planned from the beginning.

Dear Crew,

First of all let me get the obligatory "this comic is incredible" out of the way, this comic is incredible. I am a big fan of your writing Kirkman, you don't mind me calling you that, do you? You, your crew, and your comics are a constant topic of conversation between my friends and I. Me, being relatively new to this whole comic world (I've been into it for a year), have never had to face the horrors of waiting for an issue to come out. One reason is that a lot of comics I initially read were in trade form, and another is that I never really "got into" a series like I did until I picked up the Walking Dead.

I really love your stuff, Kirkman. I picked up Invincible and Battle Pope. I wrote a letter to Battle Pope, not realizing that that series was an old one, and my letter had no chance of making it to print. I felt like an idiot when my veteran comic book friend told me I was an idiot for not realizing that. I digress, Kirkman, I just wanted you to know that I went through a lot of being angry at you as well. I went through all these stages of hating how delayed this book got, one reason is because comic books are really the only silver lining in my lame-ass customer slave existence, and not getting my favorite comic book (along with Invincible) "on time" was not cool to me. I wanted to post on your forum and give you a piece of my mind...but then I realized you must have so much other things going on. You've got a life, just like anybody else, and I have come to peace with the fact that if quality is what you consistently produce, then I can wait. I just wanted to say I was wrong, and I'm sorry for yelling your name every time your books were delayed.

I do apologize for that. We will be shipping on book a month like clockwork from this point on. So those days should be behind us. I do still maintain that the delays this title has suffered have not been that severe... we've should be shipping issue 36 in October and we'll be shipping issue 33. That means we've lost three months in THREE YEARS. But yeah, we'll be doing better now.

As far as a question with where this comic book is going: Is Carl going to go crazy as he grows up? I mean, he's shot a man, zombies, been shot, has threatened to shoot others... and his dad is going slightly off the tilt...what sort of man could Carl become? From a psychologists standpoint, the boy has been through a lot, at the very least he might develop a twitch, but he stays really calm...what's up with that?

Carl has had a rough life... that will affect him as he gets older. And if all goes according to plan he will eventually get older.

Oh yeah, and another thing. I'm pretty poor, as I have a pretty nasty comic buying habit (I was buying back issues of this comic on ebay last month...I couldn't pay rent on time last month because of it...I was thinking with all the referrals I have made to people to read your books, maybe I could get reimbursed :) like maybe with an issue #1 and 2? I know this is a long shot, but as long as I have your ear, I thought I may as well ask. You can send it to (address kept confidential to avoid nutjobs).

I'd love to send you free comics but I just don't have that many lying around these days. I've got to stay well stocked for my grandkids... y'know... the little shits who won't give a damn about comics in 30 years.

P.S. In hopes of proving why my letter should get printed (or at least a part of it) my name is unique and would be a great addition to the letters page, and you don't have too many middle easterners in your letters column (I counted at most 2). Oh yea, just wanted to shout out to my LCS Comicopolis, I love that place.

Pouria Yazdi

Your name is CRAZY!! A welcome addition to the column.

Now I think it's time for me to do a little shilling. I mean... we've got to do something to keep the lights on right?

ITEM! INVINCIBLE is still kicking ass and taking names. Issue 34 should be in stores a week after this issue. Lot's of cool stuff going on. Ryan Ottley and Bill Crabtree are doing fantastic work. Give it a look. Also in stores around this time, The hardcover containing issues 14-24 and the TPB containing 25-30. So if you get "INVINCIBLE: The Ultimate Collection" volumes 1 and 2 and the volume 5 TPB you'll just need to get issues 31-34 in back issues and you'll have it all! Hooray!!

ITEM! BATTLE POPE is continuing with its monthly reprints. Issue 9, out soon, even includes a new 10-page section that's never been published. So if you're looking for NEW Battle Pope action, this is the only place to get it... at least until next year or so... hint, hint. Honor thy father and mother!

ITEM! MARVEL TEAM-UP is kicking into high gear leading up to the super-cool issue 25! The current arc, Freedom Ring is in the middle of it's run, with issue 22 out soon where we introduce the world to IRON MANIAC. It's a hoot! Also in stores soon, Marvel Team-Up Vol. 3: League of Losers, featuring issue 14, the Spider-Man/Invincible team-up! Don't miss it a second time! Eat your vegetables!

ITEM! MARVEL ZOMBIES is getting collected in AUGUST in an oversized hardcover the likes of which the world has never seen. It features a brand-spanking-new cover by Arthur Suydam and will even feature EVERY COVER DONE for the series. It also includes the actual comic, written by yours truly with art by Sean Philips. I'm told it's quite good... but who believes my mom anyway? Seeing is believing!

ITEM! My run on ULTIMATE X-MEN continues! What does the future hold for Magician? What does Jean Gray do now that she knows what she knows about The Phoenix? All these answers and more questions asked in MAGICAL running through issues 72-74 featuring art by Tom Raney. Fight the power!

ITEM! It was just announced that I'm doing yet another series for Marvel. This time it's THE IRREDEEMABLE ANT-MAN! For those of you thinking Ant-Man isn't the coolest character in the world, don't worry, this series is going to be so off the wall you won't even notice. It's going to be a blast. And for those of you who love Ant-Man more than life itself. This is the book for you, we're going to be showing this guy the respect and care he deserves. Also, the art team is Phil Hester, Ande Parks and Bill Crabtree on pencils, inks and colors. So you know it's going to be a SOLID book. Don't count your chickens until they're hatched!

That's it for this issue. See you next month!

-Robert Kirkman

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OR

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Hidey Ho, girls and boys! Welcome to ye old letters column!

We've got a special treat for you this issue, courtesy of Ed Brubaker, Sean Phillips & Val Staples but I'll get to that at the end of the letters column.

In other news Clayburn Moore is going to be doing some Walking Dead mini-statues of zombies. The first two should be in stores for the Christmas season. I've seen them and they're damn cool. Based on some of Charlie's coolest zombies from the book. I think he's going to do a series of these along with the main statue, so be on the lookout for more news coming soon.

In stores already is The Walking Dead BOOK ONE Hardcover--containing issues 1-12 for the low price of \$29.99. Be sure to pick up your copy today!

Now maybe I should answer some mail. What do YOU think?

Dear Dead Walkers,

I would love to see something like this in the walking dead

I had a mind opening experience recently the best place any survivor could go is a mountainous old growth forest type region.

For your information I am a gun owner and I recently took a 2 mile vertical hike up a mountain in full tactical gear wielding an AK47, SKS, and a .22 rifle they are all legal of course and in our party I took the AK hehe it was some good endurance training though it took 5 hours round trip just to hike 2 miles up the mountain slope. Gilded with fallen and rotting trees some of which clog up and impede passage up the mountain to the point you have to walk across a log suspended 12 feet in the air held up by several other fallen logs which may extend over 200 feet

The point is that the time it takes for a person to reach the summit in an area where there are no roads or trails is far more strenuous on the body for a living and a dead person then the areas the story has taken place in.

Frankly if a couple hundred Roamers tried to catch my ass well trying to walk up the steep mountain forest hills I would more then likely just have to sit back and watch em break there necks because there would be so much stuff they would have to jump and walk over just to get 30 feet up that hill that I pretty much could stand to not fire one shot in the process then there is the matter of how many people lived in the surrounding towns prior to the outbreak

Even if they did manage to find you they would have to somehow develop the agility to walk across fallen logs and then there is the matter of the rotting logs that they may have to pass over well this whole time they are focusing on getting to the meat which is barreling up the hill at due speed so they would eventually end up breaking their legs, necks etc by the hundreds

So I think it would stand that a centralization of mountain dwellers would stand to be the more effective solution to survivors at least for people in Southern Washington anyways hehe. Just gets me chuckling trying to picture a hoarde of those Mall Rat wannabes trying to get me up there I'd be more worried about mountain lions, and elk cause those boys are nasty.

Finally I'd like to say your drawings of the AK47 were superb the Stocks especially the folding stock AKs in the comic looked very real. Also despite that AK47s normally fire an ammunition type that's normally not found made in the US some are re-chambered to fire an American made cartridge and the AK47 seldom ever jams making it a practically superb gun to have in this situation. I've put at least 2000 rounds through my AK47 and it still works great and never once has jammed up on me a though I clean it vigorously after every 100 rounds. My AK 47 has polymer black hand guard cover and the Stock is a Telescopic to adjust to different lengths so it looks more like an M16 as well as sounds since it fires the .223 remington cartridge so its far less recognizable to the untrained eye.

Thank you Sincerely
Epave Omorocva

PS I Know some of my sentences are run ons sorry.

After all this gun talk, I thought about making some snide remark about you loving guns a bit to much. But, y'know... after all this

gun talk, I decided that probably wasn't the best idea.

Good letter.

Mr. Kirkman,

I'm 27 years old and have never written a fan letter to anybody for ANYTHING before, but after reading "Letter Hacks" in issue #27, I finally felt compelled to do so. Simply put -- TWD is awesome. Undeniably cool. In fact, I think its absolutely the best comic out there today, with your INVINCIBLE being a close second. Impeccable combination of story and art in both books. Congrats, some amazing stuff

The check's in the mail.

I think you're single-handedly, along with your great staff of artists, making Image Comics cutting edge again. You've brought back the energy and excitement that was there when SPAWN and SAVAGE DRAGON debuted and blew everybody's minds. Also, having discovered you through TWD, I've been baffled to find out how many other books you actually write! Jeez! You're a machine! Currently though, I think TWD and INVINCIBLE are your masterpieces.

You didn't like Jubilee? What about Space Ace?

Having said that, and not wanting to belabor an already much-taxed about point, I do want to point out that I think I prefer Tony Moore's jaw-dropping detail to Charlie Adlard's looser-yet-still-very-stylish approach. Of course I think Mr. Adlard is extremely talented and I can understand the pressure you guys have to meet deadlines and such, but sometimes I do long for a bit more refinement. I think the book's story and art were on equal footing back in Tony's day, whereas now I think the writing is kind of the main draw. Not really a complaint, just an observation. Hope it doesn't annoy you

Not at all. You can still get Tony's work over at Exterminators from DC/Vertigo and the first four issues of Fear Agent from Image. I don't agree with you, I think Charlie is doing a fantastic job (and I'm not alone--Eisner nomination and all) but I don't mind you voicing your opinion.

Okay, I guess that's about it. I don't really want to ask you any crazy zombie trivia questions or try to find out what's gonna happen next cause, well...isn't that kind of ruining the surprise? I kind of don't get why people ask that kind of stuff

Oh shit, wa t...I DO have two stupid questions !

1. If a zombie bit somebody who was smoking weed, would the zombie get stoned? Would the THC be able to do any damage to their already messed up zombie brains?

Actually, if a zombie bites someone who's smoking weed he turns into a toad... until he's kissed by a virgin princess... then he turns into a handsome zombie and she gets genital warts.

2. Have you seen the movie "Grandma's Boy"? It was released in January and kind of came and went pretty quickly. Just wondering cause I directed it and I think you're cool and if you liked it I'd be psyched. If you did see it and hated it -- no hard feelings, I'll still buy your books. If you haven't seen it, it comes out on DVD May 9th. Its basically about video games, grandmothers, and marijuana. Fun for the whole family! Just like your zombie stones!

Best of luck to you sir, please keep up the great work
Nicholaus Goossen

Heh, really? That's pretty cool. I haven't seen the movie, but I wanted to. I'm a huge Adam Sandler fan, and I was looking forward to seeing the movie that was basically all the guys from his films in a movie by themselves.

Was it any good?

I'll have to check that out. Thanks for writing.

Hey,
Don't know if was intentional, but thanks for the shout out to my hometown of Fayetteville, Georgia on the roadsign in Walking Dead #27. Never thought I'd see it mentioned anywhere in the real world, much less in one of my favorite comic books. It's a shame Rick & company chose Woodbury instead -- Fayetteville definitely would've benefited from the addition of some zombies. Well, besides the ones that already live there and drive SUVs.

Yours,
Josh Hammonds

You can thank the map I referenced for the story to find out what would be where on the street.

Go, Fayetteville.

Hey Mr. Kirkman,

A couple of days after sending you my first fan letter ever, I've been having panic attacks that what I wrote was slightly offensive. I didn't mean to critique Adlard or your book that much. I felt I went a little over the line. Again, I think TWD is the best comic on the planet right now, so....please, don't be pissed or annoyed. Hopefully with all the other letters you get mine will seem tame. I did think my "Can a zombie get stoned?" question was kinda funny though.

Thanks again
Nicholaus Goossen

No worries, mister Hollywood movie director. I wasn't offended at all. Charlie on the other hand, burnt all his copies of the Grandma's Boy DVD... he owned six copies... he loved that movie... until you wrote your letter.

Hi, Kirkman!

I just finished Issue 27. A bit of a slow issue, but clearly building to something more. The governor almost got me thinking he was all right, but something always seemed a bit odd about this new group, which was finally confirmed on the last page. I don't understand why they would have a bunch of biters around their fighting arena... If it's just people fighting, what's the point of the biters? Maybe we'll see the fight next issue and it'll be more clear... And I really liked how the new people have a different name for the zombies than the rest of the characters. Nice attention to detail there!

I'm trying. I think by now you know why the zombies are there-- to make the fights more intense!

One thing I don't get is how the people in the jail never noticed this town before. If they've been having these fights at night with their big lights on, wouldn't our regular crew in the prison see the glow in the distance and try to go investigate it? With no light anywhere else in the area, I'd think the lights would be easy to see, even from a few miles away...

There are some large wooded areas in-between them... and they're about four miles away if I recall... It's feasible they didn't see them.

I guess I don't have much to say this time, but thanks for another nice issue. Seems like we should get some nice action in the next couple issues when Tyreese and the rest try to find out what happened to Rick, Michonne, and Glenn.

Jim Amato

I hope we didn't let you down in the action department.

One more thing I forgot... I'm amazed at how many people seem to not read your letters page. Fans are always clamoring for letters to be printed in comics, but when someone finally does it, they don't even read them! I was shocked how many letters you got from people that sounded like they just realized the title of the book wasn't about the zombies after all. How many times did you tell us that in your letters page?!! Well, I for one, read every letter you print! It takes me a hell of a long time, but I really enjoy reading them all

Thanks,
Jim Amato

Thanks, sometimes I feel like I write these things for NOTHING. I do know a good bit of people read them though... so it's okay.

Mr. Kirkman,

The following is a short list of comments to both you, and the readers of The Walking Dead

#1) The Walking Dead is the best comics in the market today. Great story, great art, no ads, and no bullshit alt/exclusive covers. It's almost perfect. I will continue to buy and read TWD until its end. Keep up the good work.

#2) The only complaint I have is the about the late TWD books. I know you're a busy man, but you've developed a huge fan following for TWD (myself included) who get very disappointed when an issue arrives on stands weeks after its due. Although I will admit that the wait makes the book twice as satisfying to read, I would still like to see the book get back on schedule as long as there is no quality lost to do so.

We're getting on time, don't worry.

This ones for the readers:

#3) Dear Readers of TWD, STOP TELLING ROBERT WHAT HE SHOULD/ SHOULDN'T DO IN HIS OWN BOOK! If he wanted suggestions of what to do next, he'd ask. Go write your own fucking book. If Robert wants them to stay in the prison, then they're staying in the prison. If Robert doesn't want zombie animals, then there's not going to be any. If Robert doesn't want to reveal how the zombie virus started, then its never going to be revealed. If Robert doesn't want Duane and Morgan to show up again, then they will never show up. Robert has done an excellent job on this book WITHOUT your help, so lets let him continue. Just read the damn book and enjoy it.

one (possibly dumb) question:

#4) How far ahead do you have TWD written? Up to Issue 36? 50? 250?

Thus ends my list. Please be so kind as to print this letter in a future issue

Thanks,
JAKEtheSNAKE

I'm usually barely an issue ahead of Charlie script wise. Over the next year I'm going to try to get a little further ahead. I've got the book plotted FAR past that... but scripting... I'm writing 35 when he finishes 34 and so on.

Well, I'm trying to send an email to you to see if I'm any more successful in getting it printed than the hand written one that I sent to you that took a long time to write. Maybe I shouldn't have bashed Bendis in that letter after all, jeez I didn't know he was your buddy.

You kidding? I HATE Bendis.

I've stated here before that I don't have an intern or anything and I DO NOT have time to retype hand written or typed mailed-in fan letters... so I just don't print them. I read them... but I just don't have the resources to print them. Thanks for emailing this one.

Anyway, I'm loving this current arc of the series very much. It was afraid Glenn (who by far is the most likeable character in the book) was gonna bite it at any moment. The tension was palpable. Please don't kill him, please! And can't wait to see if they force Rick or Glenn to fight the zombies in their SWAT outfit! Poor guys.

Only time will tell.

So, I'm loving the book, and loved what you did with Marvel Zombies. Great covers, great art, great ending! Man this was a great story for you. A friend of mine suggested that it could have been three issues, but I disagree. Just right amount of length, and that ending was totally awesome. Which was your favorite cover so far? I can't wait to get that FF #1 cover

My favorite was the X-Men #1 cover. That book had my favorite ending that I've written... I was really proud of how I ended that mini. Some people didn't like the ending... and I think those people have no SOUL.

After picking that up, I decided to finally read invincible and bought the hardcover to volume 1. Awesome. Love it, especially Atom Eve. Please get Clay Moore to do a sculpt of her (oh, and I'm extremely excited about him doing a walking dead statue, made my day). I'm already committed to buying that awesome Invincible statue. And then I went out and bought Marvel Team Up vol 1 tpb. Good clean fun. Yeah, not the greatest stuff, but I liked it, and will pick up the rest. Now all I gotta do is pick up Marvel Knights 2099 trade, and didn't you do FF: Foes?

Yes, I did all that stuff. Thanks for the purchases.

Finally, please let us know before hand about anything like the Image Holiday Special story. I had no clue you had a walking dead story, and need to buy it now. I bought the Deluxe hardcover and been loving it man. Great way to read it in extra large pages.

I'm SURE I mentioned that in the letters column. How ELSE would I let you know? You guys really should read this stuff... I can't just call you at home, not ALL of you at least.

Thanks for some great stories, Robert, and I gotta say the Walking Dead is my favorite series of all. Thanks to you I started buying comics again.

Michael
Dallas, TX

Thanks man, it's good to have you.

Letter Hacks,

Zombies, but then, that's not really what the book is about is it? That's just the setting, that's part of the pitch. It allows the human psyche to be examined, for a bunch of chit chat and human drama. But hey, it's cool, there's zombies!

Did I mention Kirkman sucks? No, must have been a letter to Invincible. Hadn't written any letters in a while, the books have been too damn good. Changes in artistic teams didn't matter, Kirkman's stories were just too good. And heck, the new artists rock. Yes they do. And Kirkman doesn't suck at all!

But specifically, Walking Dead. The book is consistent, the drama feels very real and you get lost in the book during the time you are reading an issue. It's kind of disappointing when, having read it, you look at your pile of comics (if you're lucky to have that many GOOD comics) and know that there's nothing in the batch like it

Sure there are plenty of comics aping Bendis and having the characters yap more than they do anything else, but that's not what Walking Dead is about. You just don't get the same satisfaction anywhere else.

There's always action and what's different is that you see the characters often at a loss as to what to do next. That decision is an important one given their predicament. And it's always given to us straight as they - like we would - try to figure out solutions given the resources at hand and the risk to them.

What a cool, often deep read.

Regards,
Thad Branco

Thanks for the kind words.

Dear Robert,
I love your book and I believe in one of your letter pages you wrote that Charlie sold some of the pages of original art. I was just wondering if he has some to sell or if he sells them through a website of some sort. I'm trying not to be picky, but I would love to have one of them with Rick and a zombie on one and they wouldn't have to be on the same panel necessary. There's no rush I know your busy writing all of those books, so whenever you get time to find out or tell Charlie to contact me. I would appreciate it.

Thank You for your time
Cary Shenk

Charlie Adlard's original art can be purchased at WWW.SPLASHPAGEART.COM at some fairly reasonable prices.

Hey,

Just finished reading issue 27. Quite a lot happening there. One thing did bother me though. Why doesn't Rick, Michonne, or even Glenn say "Hey, what if these people aren't friendly? Maybe we shouldn't be chasing after them.." When they meet these people, I half expected one of them to just start spilling everything about their camp at the prison, which fortunately Michonne was smart enough to head that off. This kind of makes me wonder though if any of these people ever watched a zombie movie themselves. I don't recall any of them ever referencing any. If I were a survivor in a zombie situation I would often be saying things like "This is what they did in Dawn of the Dead." or "Hey, a guy got himself killed like that in 28 days later."

How crappy would this comic be if someone said "Let's be careful, this never worked in Dawn of the Dead." I mean REALLY? So no, nobody in this book as seen a zombie movie, or at least... they don't comment on it. If you were lost in the woods, chased by bears... and you came upon a cabin with smoke coming out of the top, you'd beat on the door and ask for help, glad that you've encountered another human. Is that SAFE? No, but I think 90% of us would just want that human contact and wouldn't really think about the dangers. Same thing here. They haven't encountered any evil humans yet. By nature we do seem to band together in times of great tragedy. It's only natural that what we, from the outside, view as naive and optimistic is really just human nature.

NEXT time, though... they'll be a little weary of any new humans they encounter--if they survive this one.

Anyways, so I expect Tyreese will be leading some sort of rescue mission in future issues...? I'll be excited to see what happens next. I was worried things were going to get real dull in the prison, though they never really did. The riot suits were a nice touch

Tyreese went out on his own, for reasons that are yet to be revealed.

BTW, I wrote you guys note once before and you published it. So this is actually not my first time writing to a comic book. It's my second.. and I do not think I am the Greg T. you think I am, but hey s'ok

Greg T

How many Greg Thompson's could there be?

Okay, I'm going to forego the usual "shilling session" to talk about someone ELSE'S book. Yeah, I know, I'm as shocked as you guys are... but bear with me here.

Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips are all famous and stuff. You know them, right? They did SLEEPER together over at DC/ WILDSTORM and Ed's gone on to do Daredevil, Captain America and Uncanny X-Men at Marvel. Sean is the brilliant artist who made MARVEL ZOMBIES look so pretty. They're both talented S.O.B.s and they have a new book coming out.

CRIMINAL, I'm told, is along the lines of SLEEPER in tone. It follows the bad guys, the Criminals, as they do Criminal stuff--it's going to be sweet. And they've even got my talented colorist friend Val (Battle Pope, X-Men: Deadly Genesis) Staples on colors. I'm really looking forward to it, so we're running a keen preview here in the book--and in FULL COLOR no less.

But enough from me--lets hear it from the horses mouth himself... Ed Brubaker!

*Hey Walking Deadheads,
Before I launch into my brief spiel, let me thank Robert Kirkman for opening up his book like this for me, and in color, even. Okay Robert, I'll name my first son Ben Reilly Brubaker, but I still don't understand why... So, the next five pages are what I like to call our movie trailer on paper for CRIMINAL. Imagine all the caption boxes as voice-over dialog and you'll see what I mean... But what else can I tell you about CRIMINAL? That this is the book I've been waiting to do for years and years, for one. I've had most of the stories that'll appear in this comic mapped out for a long time, and have been building bits and pieces of the entire 'world' of the series for a few years now in my notebook. The goal is to create a new kind of crime comic, a book that feels as much like a mood as it does a plot. To show brief glimpses of lives lived underground, on the run from the law. I've always been drawn towards that kind of material. You can see it in much of my work on books like Daredevil, Gotham Central, or Sleeper. But with CRIMINAL, along with the incredibly talented Sean Phillips (who you all know from MARVEL ZOMBIES) and ably assisted by colorist Val Staples, I've created a cast of characters and a book that can contain any kind of story I want to tell with them - from heist stories, to prison breakouts, to revenge dramas, and anything in between. And we're trying to make the monthly comics themselves extra, something worth your money and your time. So, beyond the continuing stories that appear each issue, there will also be back-up stories and extras, articles by myself and other writers about the crime genre, and even the occasional deleted scene. I think it's going to be a blast, and I hope you'll join us for it -- we launch this October, from Marvel's Icon label, so please tell your local retailer and look for us on the shelves*

-Ed Brubaker

Well, I know I'M excited, and if you're not--behold the CRIMINAL PREVIEW starting on the next page. And be sure to PREORDER your copy of CRIMINAL #1, in stores THIS OCTOBER from Marvel's ICON COMICS.

That's it for this month. See you all back here in 30 days or less.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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Hey look! Issue 31.

Uh... not a lot of free time these days... just got back from San Diego (it was great meeting you). So... let's answer some MAIL!

Woo hoo!

I received the first collection of comics as a gift last december, and read them a month ago out of boredom, I was very taken with your view of a giant zombie apocolypse, the comic is very fast and very witty, but my favorite part would be the very human characters.

Amazingly, I even tracked down a comic book shop so I could find out what happens, it wasn't quite how I pictured a comic book shop would be like, for one, it was very well lit and the staff was nothing if not helpful, but the rest was exactly how I pictured it, in that a large fraction of the patrons were overweight and kept staring at my chest and mumbling.

In all fairness--you should admit that probably happens in other places as well, right?

I realize you must get a lot of mail, so I doubt this will be read, and I very much doubt I'll ever get a reply, but I thought I would take the time to tell you that you are doing a great job with your comic book and it is very enjoyable.

Also, I realize the mail account name "burnumall" sounds a bit weird, it's a friend's email account, I'm curious as to exactly what it means but I'm too embarrassed to ask.

-Girl who didn't sign her email

Well, you'll be happy to know I emailed your friend and she told me it has something to do with ancient burial rites and funerary incantations. It all sounded a little fruity to me.

Dear Roberto Kirkenhiem IV,

You're gunna off Glenn aren't ya? It ain't gunna

be rick or Mich, 'cause they're fighters who don't go down like punks. (unless mich sacrifices herself for the good of the others... which I doubt she would do seeing as she's still a relatively new character)

Though if they end up having to fight each other in the arena, I think you need to include with each copy a burnt CD with the Star Trek fight music.

Anyway, on to more pressing matters.

1) I dunno how Rick and the gang are gunna get out of THIS sticky situation (in reference to issue 27 since I know these don't get printed for like 3 issues)

This isn't a question! Grrr.

2) What was the first thing you ever got published, and how did you feel? Your work is so good that it's inspired me to write my own comic books. So far i've got my own zombie series planned, along with a superhero trade and what i'm told is a semi cheesy drama about a guy who has a type writer that can write dreams. Oh, and I almost forgot, but I've got a batman story arch that i'd love to do sometime, but i'd imagine i'd have to be a total success or DC would have to be completely desperate before they let me come within 10 feet of a batman script.

My first published work was the self-published Battle Pope (being reprinted in color by Image right now). It was a great feeling to get that printed comic and hold it in my hands... and I still feel the same way whenever I get a new issue of anything I work on. I truly love this job.

The type writer one is the shortest of the three so i'm going to try and get that published first.

Good luck.

anyway keep up the good work, lovin' it all, Invincible, marvel zombies, Battle Pope especially.

-Phil

Oh, see--you already knew about Battle Pope.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,
I am writing this letter to fulfill your female quotient...that's right... I'm a girl. A girl who reads comics...and drools over zombies. But I digress...I read this article in the NY Times a while back, in the fashion section, no less, about the globalization of zombies...I just want to make sure that WD, via the transitive properties, doesn't become lame. Anyway, I really have been enjoying the female characters...Michonne seems interesting...let's see what happens there...Carol seems like she's suffering from PTSD but I hope it's something more devastatingly interesting like bipolar or schizophrenia. I feel like everyone in WD could carry the story on their own...could have their own spin-off...except maybe Dale..... and, I mean, I love what's his face... but Lori is hardcore. She's going to give birth au natural! Boy or Girl? Any names? How about Viscera?

Love,
Leslie

PS. (my gentleman friend will die if you print this)

Consider your gentleman friend DEAD! You don't like Dale? What's wrong with him? Carol probably does have something wrong with her--but y'know... who's there who could diagnose something like that? Thanks for reading.

Just wanted to thank you guys for the awesome story that The Walking Dead is.
Your story is the reason I am awake at one in the morning reading with a flashlight and keeping a fire axe at close reach :)

That and the fact that you didn't pay the electric bill, right?

I've not felt this kind of chills since I first read Stephen Kings' The Shining.

Thanks again and keep up the excellent work. I am hungry for more.

Best regards from Iceland
Siggi Ben :)

Thanks, and keep it real! Have fun in Iceland.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Let me start by saying I really love The Walking

Dead comics. We used to be on Ebay comic boards and now are on a forum called The Comics Corral and someone pointed out this comic to my husband, who in turn, bought them for me. The series was at issue 19 when he bought the first trade paperback. I fell in love with it. I now not only own all the trade paper backs, but I am getting the ongoing issues, too.

I have no complaints about the story and think it is great. The only suggestion that I have is to make it a TV Show (HBO/Showtime) I don't think they could do justice in a 2-3 hour movie, but an on going series would be great.

TV show, huh? That's a good suggestion. I'll get right on that.

I also am really hoping we can make it to the Comic Con in San Diego so I can meet you. By the way my hubby loves The Walking Dead, too. He mainly collects Superhero Comics. We have thought about checking out Invincible, but we haven't had the chance yet. He does get Ultimate X-Men and Marvel Team-Up. The ONLY complaint is we did order The Walking Dead Hard Cover 1-24 and all we got was the shaft as is sold out. LOL.

Thank you so much for this comic(series).

Thanks,
Kelly Garcia

Wow... is that three out of the first five emails that are girls? Weird. Lotsa ladies in this issue's letters column. Right on.

DUDE!

I hadn't been to my LCS for a while so when I went I had issues 25, 26 & 27 waiting for me so I thought this would be a good opportunity to reread them all from # 1, so I did, and I found some things hopefully you can help me with....

1. In #1 I noticed the escaped jailbird shooting at Rick and Shane looks a lot like a skinny Axel, who just happens to be in jail for armed robbery. Is this a coincidence, or have I ruined where you are going with the Axel plot? Sorry if I have.

Nope, that's just a coincidence... because I'm a hack. He doesn't look THAT much like Axel though.

2. In #15 Thomas says to Patricia he saw her with Otis and asks if it's her boyfriend. A few pages later when Rick leaves to shoot zombie Shane, Lori wonders if he is going to check on Otis at the farm since they haven't seen him since they left the farm, and he doesn't show up at the jail until Michonne does in #19. So my question is, how did Thomas see Otis? Is this an oversight on your part, 'cause it doesn't add up?

These aren't the droids you're looking for. I think Otis was at the prison briefly dropping

off supplies and Lori hadn't seen him. Or something. I'd have to check out the issues... I'm not convinced there is a discrepancy.

3. With all these couples hooking up and having sex, how come no one else is getting pregnant? There's been no talk about birth control or anything, and I thought Hershel would of had a talk to Maggie about it.

I'm sure there's a condom or two lying around the prison somewhere. Little things like this, I feel, are better left assumed and not really dealt with. I mean... where are they getting toothpaste? Is that just in the prison? Did it run out? What about... candles? Or lightbulbs? Did Glenn really steal enough batteries for the flashlights to still be working? It'd be boring if I took the time to explain all that stuff.

4. I know Axel and Tyreese didn't see the helicopter, but how did they not hear it? You can usually hear them way before you can actually see them.

Maybe they we're singing really loud to each other--or were inside the prison, playing basketball--or were yelling at someone. There's any number of excuses... some of them aren't even silly.

5. Since people can turn into a zombie even from deaths non zombie bite related, does that mean the zombie plague/incident started with some kind of chemical warfare or something? Obviously the air/oxygen on earth has been altered. Is this correct? How did you come up with this idea? I've never seen this kind of thing in the Zombie genre where they turn without being bitten.

The origins of the zombie plague are unknown and will probably remain that way... but yeah--it's something even the living are infected with.

I had a few more queries the other day but I can't think of them now....

Sorry about that.

Anyway, keep up the great work. I am loving The Walking Dead. How much you ask? Well, I've been buying every Batman comic for 19 years and they've never taken second place on my pile to be read before, so CONGRATS!!!

Deakin Gilford
Australia

Awesome--thanks for writing.

Letter Hacks,

The reason I am writing is that your fans have written in about some really good zombie stories/movies that I normally wouldn't have known about. Undead, The Zombie Survival Guide, Reign of the Dead, and The Rising/City of the Dead all

come to mind. I have no plans to stop buying this comic until the aliens are introduced, but I still seek zombie entertainment between your books. Please encourage your readers to write in about other stories in the genre.

The Walking Dead story is still going strong. I Think you will be able to do a lot with the 2nd group of survivors introduced in 27. Keep up the great work.

Mike Gineman

Thanks!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

You are the man! This is the best Zombie comic ever made! I can't get enough of the great story telling and the art is the best B/W I have seen. I hope this title is leading its way to at least a trilogy of The Walking Dead movies. I have to say that from watching NOLD when I was a kid I grew up with an irrational fear of dead people climbing out of graves and attacking me. Now I am thrilled about all things zombie related and it seems the world is seeing a new age of Zombie interest. Here's to another generation of kids growing up with the fear of the dead. Lastly, is it possible to have readers submit a list of their favorite zombie movies and you could use this info to make a: The Walking Dead Fans Top 25 Zombie Movies Ever list in a future issue? Thanks!

-Some guy who didn't sign his email

That's not a bad idea. Why don't you letter writers start sending in obscure recommendations? I mean... we all know the top TEN zombie movies... or the top ten well known zombie movies... but what about the obscure ones. Snap to it!

Dear Kirkman,

Just thought I would write to give you my props, to ask some questions and voice a complaint.

1. I was getting pretty restless while all of the women in the comic were being pansies, I mean sure, they helped out when they needed to but most of the time they just sat back, worried, complained and had sex with there male counterparts. I was very excited when you brought in Michonne a strong female character. I'm interested in seeing if or how the other female characters react to someone with such a different outlook. Are they going to get up and stop being pansies, or just whine and complain about how much Michonne is not a pansy?

They're probably going to wash clothes and do dishes... and behave. Seriously though (I'm not sexist) the point of the book (or one of them at least) is that the characters grow and change as time goes on. You've got to start somewhere and as time goes on I think you'll see all the characters, female and male, evolve to survive in this zombie-filled

world. They won't be frail and helpless much longer (not that they totally were before). Sigh... I should have never killed Donna.

2. In issues 26 and 27 the prospect of feeding the dead to the zombies is brought into the story line... This just doesn't make sense to me. If soon after you die you become a zombie, and zombies don't eat other zombies then could you really shoot someone, chop them up, put them into a sack then feed them to a zombie? I don't think so... Zombies wouldn't be interested in a cold severed arm, it takes the primal hunting instinct out of the picture! I guess it's pointless for me to bring this up now, but eh...

There is a period of time, after a person dies, before the body starts to decompose. As shown in issue 29 with The Governor's daughter, after a while... the meat gets old and isn't good... but before then, it's almost as good as eating live meat.

3. Please don't have a zombie baby... maybe a zombie toddler kind of like in Pet Semetary, but no zombie baby.

No zombie baby? We'll see... if Lori EVER has that kid that is...

Thanks for reading my ranting...

Much love,
Lauren Caitlin Ayrey
Olympia, Wa

Man... a whole lot of ladies wrote in this month. That's totally cool.

Starting on the next page--ROCK BOTTOM PREVIEW!

Okay--now for something else--another preview!

Coming in September from AiT/PlanetLar is ROCK BOTTOM a story written by JOE CASEY and drawn by none other than... CHARLIE ADLARD!! That's right kids--our boy has been moonlighting. There's plenty of info on the next page before the preview so I won't bore you with details--GO CHECK IT OUT! And make sure you tell your retailer you want this book.

Now I think it's time for me to do a little shilling. I mean... we've got to do something to keep the lights on right?

ITEM! INVINCIBLE is still kicking ass and taking names. Issue 35 should be in stores a week after this issue. Lot's of cool stuff going on. Ryan Ottley and Bill Crabtree are doing fantastic work. Give it a look. Also in stores around this time, The hardcover containing issues 14-24 and the TPB containing 25-30. So if you get "INVINCIBLE: The Ultimate Collection" volumes 1 and 2 and the volume 5 TPB you'll just need to get

issues 31-35 in back issues and you'll have it all! Hooray!!

ITEM! BATTLE POPE is continuing with its monthly reprints. Issue 9, out now, even includes a new 10-page section that's never been published. So if you're looking for NEW Battle Pope action, this is the only place to get it... at least until next year or so... hint, hint. Issue 10 is also in stores now... ask for it by name.

ITEM! MARVEL TEAM-UP is kicking into high gear leading up to the super-cool issue 25! The current arc, Freedom Ring is in the middle of it's run, with issue 22 out soon where we introduce the world to IRON MANIAC. It's a hoot! Also in stores soon, Marvel Team-Up Vol. 3: League of Losers, featuring issue 14, the Spider-Man/Invincible team-up! Don't miss it a second time! Eat your vegetables!

ITEM! MARVEL ZOMBIES is getting collected in AUGUST in an oversized hardcover the likes of which the world has never seen. It features a brand-spanking-new cover by Arthur Suydam and will even feature EVERY COVER DONE for the series. It also includes the actual comic, written by yours truly with art by Sean Philips. I'm told it's quite good... but who believes my mom anyway? Seeing is believing!

ITEM! My run on ULTIMATE X-MEN continues! What does the future hold for Magician? What does Jean Gray do now that she knows what she knows about The Phoenix? All these answers and more questions asked in MAGICAL running through issues 72-74 featuring art by Tom Raney. Fight the power! Hot new artist Ben Oliver returns for issue 75--which features the introduction of ULTIMATE CABLE! LOOK OUT!

ITEM! It was just announced that I'm doing yet another series for Marvel. This time it's THE IRREDEEMABLE ANT-MAN! For those of you thinking Ant-Man isn't the coolest character in the world, don't worry, this series is going to be so off the wall you won't even notice. It's going to be a blast. And for those of you who love Ant-Man more than life itself. This is the book for you, we're going to be showing this guy the respect and care he deserves. Also, the art team is Phil Hester, Ande Parks and Bill Crabtree on pencils, inks and colors. So you know it's going to be a SOLID book. Don't count your chickens until they're hatched!

That's it for this issue. See you next month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Issue 32 is here, people! The zombie movie that never ends just keeps on not ending and I, for one, couldn't be happier.

Charlie and Cliff have really outdone themselves on this issue. Just when you think these two couldn't do a better job they just come out and blow you away! Nice job, guys.

If you haven't pre-ordered your Walking Dead busts from your local comic shop or from csmooresstudio.com please do so NOW--you will NOT be disappointed. Sculptor-supreme did an AMAZING job on these and you don't want to miss them.

Now let's answer some damn letters!

Dear Bob,

First off I absolutely love this comic, I just started reading them a little less than a month ago and I'm hooked. I find myself yearning for the next one to come out. Now with the questions and comments

1 I was relieved when Rick had gotten his bad hand chopped off, because otherwise he would be kinda useless for a while

Yeah, and now we don't have to make sure he doesn't USE that hand by accident...

2. In issue #28 when the Governor was watching the zombies eating the corpses was that a zombie cheerleader at the far right corner of the room.

Could be.

3 If Lori had a miscarriage would the baby become a zombie baby and A) Eat her from the inside out or B) Will she give birth to a zombie baby that would attack Hershel upon delivery.

Possibly BOTH! You never know.

Keep up the good work!!
Matt M

P.S. Please print my letter!!

Will do!

Mr. Kirkman,

I just finished reading Walking Dead 29. I've previously read the rest of the series, except 28 which I missed. Until now I've enjoyed the series, at least in as much as one can enjoy a series full of heartbreak and misery.

Sadly, I think you've made a huge misstep with this last issue. It isn't gory or sad or heartbreaking. It is vile. It is virtually a celebration of cruelty. It was difficult for me to get through the whole issue.

Before you dismiss this as just another silly moralistic diatribe, let me tell you about myself. I'm your standard thirty-something Canadian atheist at the liberal end of the liberal spectrum. You won't find a more vociferous defender of freedom of expression. I guess what worries me is that if a work doesn't have any meaning or message (which this issue clearly does not), then all that's left is its value as entertainment. It makes me cringe to think that the material you present in this issue might be anyone's idea of entertainment.

Why am I bothering to write this? I guess I was fairly shocked (I just finished reading it). I made reconsider reading anything you

write, although I'll still be picking up Invincible and I'll give Ant-man a shot. Anyway, I know that if I was writing something I'd want to know when I'd made an impact on someone either way, so there you go. For the sake of your remaining readers (you won't count me among them), I hope you can right the ship on future issues

Sincerely,
Alan Brown

This is a harsh world and harsh things are going to happen to the characters. If you can't handle what happened to Michonne, it's a good thing you're getting off the crazy ride now because I'm sure there are worse things ahead.

Robert,

I was never into comics even as a kid--never followed a monthly book--never really gave a rat's fanny about them until a friend introduced me to Gaiman's Sandman, which got me interested in the art form, but I still never bought a monthly book. Never really cared about zombies, either. They just didn't interest me

Considering, then, my apathy toward both comics and zombies, the fact that I am now a slavering Walking Dead addict who buys the monthly books speaks volumes for your talents and those of Messrs. Adlard and Rathburn. That really ought to make you proud

Now on to the questions

You've mentioned in previous Letter Hacks columns that you have no plans to reveal the origin of the zombie plague, which is, I think, a good move--but as time goes by, are we going to learn more about them? Thus far, we know that the zombies are a) dead; b) ravenous; c) retain no memory of their prior lives, nor any brain functions beyond "eat" and "chase"; d) divided into two categories--roamers and lurkers, and e) die when their brains are bashed in. I could stand to learn more. Seems to me that if Rick & Co. have the chance to learn more information about them, it's another good device to keep people hooked and buying

We'll certainly learn more about them--but I'd like to point out that we know even LESS than you state here. I mean, just because our characters have started to refer to them as roamers and lurkers that doesn't mean that there actually are two categories or that there are ONLY two categories. The characters don't have all the answers--they could be wrong about a LOT of things.

Bear in mind that I'm not telling you how to do your job, or suggesting improvements. It's pretty obvious the series doesn't need any, or I wouldn't keep buying the books. Basically, this is just me saying, "I'd like to learn more about the zombies."

Tell me more about the zombies, dammit!

Your devoted fan,
Jim Paimer

P.S. Comics aside, you're a pretty fine writer. The aforementioned Gaiman seems to have transitioned from comics to novels (he should go back to comics)--any plans to do any noncomic writing?

If there is ever a Walking Dead spin-off with other characters in another part of the country... I plan for that

to be a novel series... but I have to learn how to write novels first. So it will probably never happen.

Letter Hacks,

Your work is top of the game, thank you. I can't wait 'til the governor gets axe to the head or torn up by zombies. Charlie, I just bought some of your art over on splashpageart.com after hearing about that in the lettercols. I definitely read the lettercols! Keep 'em goin' if you can, especially with letters like that AK-47 expert... tell us more dude! So how did Charlie draw such a good AK-47... and does Charlie live in Eng and or something... how do you get your scripts to him?

Carrier pigeon, usually. They've got these kick-ass bank tube things that will get stuff over there--but I can't afford those.

What made you choose Moby Dick as the book that woman was reading? I try and balance my pop reading with classics and just started that one like 2 weeks ago. It's frickin hilarious... well okay it is quite funny if you get past the extremely detailed descriptions... I can see how that sucker would be good for illustration. Any favorite classics of yours, Kirkman? TWD is classic, dude. You've got all these characters to handle and I admire that you take the panels to develop them. You've got the long view in mind and yet each issue and story-arc is great in itself.

What's the next con you'll be at? Do you want to expand your readership? I'm thinking elementary school book fairs. Ok maybe not. I'm certainly doing my best. I can't get my wife to read them but I retell each Walking Dead issue to her and she loves it. So thanks for making me sound like a good storyteller. And Charlie, as soon as I get a coffee table, the big hardback edition is going there so everyone can see your rockin' art. You both have really taken the medium to a higher level, so thanks again for your sweat and tears.

Brian Hans

I hope your wife isn't just humoring you. If she really liked it, the lazy broad would READ the things on her own.

As far as cons go. In light of that last comment, I really don't want to appear in any public places where you could find me. That and the fact that I have a small child at home that I really don't enjoy being away from. I'm trying to sit out 2007 completely. But once the boy is old enough, the wife and I will be wanting to take him all over the place--so I'm sure I'll be back on the convention circuit before too long. That is, If I'm still even remotely possible in a year or so.

Dear Kirk-Man:

Big fan of the book. Normally, I am not a big horror genre guy, but TWD is entertaining and original enough to keep me interested month in and month out. Keep up the good work, and I will keep buying it

Now that the little bit of ass-kissery is out of the way, the main question I have for you is this: Since Bendis seems to love to throw your name in his books, any temptation to do the same in here? Perhaps have one of the survivors rooting through a medical kit and find a tube of Bendis-Brand Hemmrhoidal Cream? Or maybe they sit back and enjoy a nice 40oz bottle of Brubaker Malt Liquor? Who else would you throw in there?

As much as I love seeing my name plastered all through POWERS it REALLY pulls me out of the story when they need to get over to the corner of "Ellis and Brubaker" street or when they meet up with "Detective Joe Quesada EIC of Marvel Comics." I know most of the guys he does at this point and it's distracting to read such specific names all the time. That said, Axel is named after Marvel Editor Axel Alonso--but you'd never know that if I didn't TELL you. So THEY know but it doesn't pull YOU out of the story.

That's how I prefer to do things. Bendis is a hack.

Anyways, thanks for reading this email. Missed you at Wizard World Chicago, maybe next year?

Peace,
Andy Jonathan.

2008 would be the soonest you'll see me at Chicago again.

Dear Robert,

I'm still fairly new to the book, and there are a lot of characters to keep track of: you mind killing some of them off? Rick, I got. And Michonne...Carol is blonde, right? I think I wrote a mail recently asking you some questions, but it might not have gone through. One question was basically: What does God think about the whole alien/ zombie take-over of Earth? I mean he kind of let it happen, right?

God is make believe in the world of The Walking Dead.

How come none of the characters at the prison ever pray?

I'm sure Hershel does... maybe more. I just haven't shown that yet... or, actually... I seem to recall showing Hershel pray at LEAST once.

Another question: How much does it take to kill one of the zombies? Or are they even killable? They're kind of dead already too, right? And with so many dead zombies around how come there's no smell?

There's a smell, but I imagine you'd get used to it after a while. Kill the brain and you kill the zombie.

3) Why are you wrapping up Marvel Team up? Hopefully to go on to do bigger and better(Captain America) things (again), right?

I'm wrapping up Marvel Team-Up because it's a hard (but fun) book to write and I'd like to move on to other things. It was going to continue, they were actually talking to a big name creator about coming on with 25 at one point--which would have been cool, but sales were so low they decided to end it.

Your mailing address says Lexington, Kentucky? You don't really live there, do you?

I live CLOSE to Lexington. I need to change that P.O. Box...

How come there are no flashbacks in TWD? To b4 the plague--is it considered a plague?--I mean. I think it would be fun.

This isn't LOST--and there's not anything important I've had to show. Issue 7 started with a flashback. Haven't NEEDED to do it since then.

And, finally, I think any good writer or editor would tell you ya got way too many heroes in the book, especially for it being black and white! They mentioned watching a movie in #30; what kinda movies we talkin' about? Recent? How long ago Was the plague anyway?? Maybe Rick and company oughtta just find a tank and go looking for people, huh? Who was the black guy who came back to the prison at the end of #30? I didn't recognize him!! I thought only Rick, Michonne and the meak looking guy went after the helicopter! Nobody called him by name, either: THAT was a BIG help!

It was Tyreese--did I really not say his name? Crud. I do that way too often. Sorry it's hard to follow all the characters. I'll see what I can do about killing some of them off.

I am liking me some Walking Dead though, but I still say Invincible will probably outlast this series in the long run, although both will have pretty healthy runs. How about "Dead End" for a new letters column title, just off the top of my head? How about a riot at the prison? Why am I asking so many questions? What IS Funk-O-Tron, anyway??...

Sincerely
Andrew J. Shaw

Thanks for writing!

Mr. Kirkman,

First, I would like to say that I am a fan of your work (Invincible is the best superhero comic in the universe). However, issue #29 of The Walking Dead is making my fandom a bit shaky.

As a man of African descent, I was quite disturbed and appalled by the image of a strong, powerful black woman stripped of her power and humanity by being raped and brutally beaten by a white man not once, but twice in the same issue.

As a man of white people descent, I was quite disturbed when that white dude cut off that other white dudes hand in the previous issue. But this book isn't meant to make people HAPPY--carry on.

I must say that I am way past tired of this sick, pathological white man's portrayal of black women as some kind of chocolate rape fantasy in film (Pam Grier and Halle Berry anyone?) and specifically in comics. I've already had enough of this shit with Storm. Courtesy of Chris Claremont, she left Africa at the behest of a white man, never looked back and has since been a stripped-down, scantily-clad, placed-in-bondage sex toy for the Hellfire Club and Loki. She's also been stroke-off fodder for horny white male readers who dared cry foul when some spear chucker in Wakanda married her and thus stole their ebony S&M fantasy away from them.

I can't be held responsible for how black women have been treated in comics in general. This is a harsh world and harsh things happen to ALL the people in this book. I'm sorry it was the black woman who got raped but I'm ONLY interested in "could or would that happen in such a situation" and if the answer is yes, I don't feel like I did anything wrong.

But I digress. The matter at hand here is The Walking Dead #29.

I understand the idea of dramatic effect in storytelling, but goddamn it, did Michonne have to be tied up spread eagle, raped and tortured? Did a strong black woman have to be broken down to the lowest of the low? Is it a case of art imitating life in the sense that if black people are too strong they not only have to be stopped but destroyed? Would you have put any of the white female characters in the book through the same ordeal? I don't think you would have. You never see strong white female characters in comics being dehumanized like that. I guarantee that Michonne's fate will not be shared by Supergirl, Power Girl and certainly not Wonder Woman.

I'm sure Wonder Woman has been tied up and tortured at a couple points in her career. Ever read Phantom Lady (I think that's what the book was called) that woman was white, and she was tied up on the cover of almost EVERY ISSUE.

I assure you this was not an effort to "destroy" a strong black female.

I know that the comic book industry is an ivory tower that is and always has been ruled by white men of varying ages, sensibilities and prejudices. And those prejudices have often shown themselves in the stereotypical and racist depictions of people of color, specifically African people, and, case in point, African women. I'm not letting Chris Claremont off the hook for writing storm as some exotic sex slave. I'm not letting racist-ass Robert Crumb off the hook for Angelfood McSpade. And, I'm not letting you off the hook for your need to portray yet another black woman rape fantasy in The Walking Dead. Whether you did this unconsciously, subconsciously or very consciously I don't know, but you did it and my conscience won't allow me to sit still and not address this. Some people don't know how to call shit when shit needs to be called, but I'm calling you on this, Mr. Kirkman.

You're more than entitled to be pissed off and to tell me your pissed off. But when a white male is raped, I hope you're just as upset. And when a white woman has something bad happen to her... and when anything generally rotten happens to any character in this book... I expect an email.

I'll spare you a lengthy diatribe about how the rape of African women by white men was part of the dehumanization process during slavery, but I will say that I know several African American readers of The Walking Dead and they too have expressed their disgust at the portrayal of a black woman getting raped by a white man. Some have told me that they're not going to read the book anymore. The black female readers that I know have especially expressed their disgust. Even though we all know that Michonne is going to get some medieval-on-your-ass payback on that no-good, Dick Dastardly-looking cracker, it won't begin to make up for her humanity being robbed like that. The image of Michonne's bloody, swollen face is still difficult for me to look at. And I don't want to hear any of that "but the rape was off panel" shit either.

It was SUPPOSED to be difficult for you to look at. It was supposed to make you upset. You're supposed to care about these characters enough to be pissed off when bad things happen to them.

But listen, if I was portraying The Governor as anything but an evil psychotic freak--if he had even the smallest hint of "this is an okay guy" that would be completely racist of me... and I would expect to be "called out." But I had a horrible character do a horrible thing to show how horrible he was.

And it was Michonne because she's a character readers would expect to die--the danger is more real for her. Rick has survived enough that readers think he might be safe. Also, in the scene that lead to her rape--Rick's hand was cut off, Michonne attacked Governor, causing him to retaliate.

I couldn't cut Michonne's hand off--and have Rick attack Gov, and then get raped, simply because a side character getting a hand cut off ISN'T a big deal. It had to be RICK. So then the options for a character attacking are Michonne and Glenn--it seemed more in-character to me for Michonne to attack instead of Glenn. I wanted to kind of have Glenn freaking out--this is the first time he's really been around some shit like this. Sure, he crept around zombies to gather supplies but he'd never seen someone whack off someone else's hand--that would STILL be traumatic.

I'm just saying, there's a logical reason for everything... and it's NOT racial in motivation.

Mr. Kirkman, I met you and took a photo with you at the 2006 San Diego Comic Con and you seem like a really cool guy. I don't want to believe that you're a racist, but I really don't think that you understand the gravity of the images you have portrayed, especially to your African American fans, particularly your female ones. You're one of my favorite writers in the business. I love Invincible and it was that love that made me want to read The Walking Dead in the first place, but I don't know if I can read it anymore after this. It's a damn shame because like I said, I am a fan. At least I think I still am

Militantly yours,
Sundjata Abubakari

What would you prefer? Do you REALLY want every African-American character to be SAFE because I don't want to look like a racist? Do you want to read a book like that? A book

where characters you relate to have no danger--no suspense because you know I can't hurt them for fear of a backlash?

That's not the kind of book I want to write.

NOBODY is safe in this book. NOBODY. If I kill a Jewish person am I going to hear from Jewish people? Rodriguez is the first Hispanic character in the book. Does he have to be safe so that race remains represented? I CAN'T THINK like that or the stories will suffer.

Please cut me some slack here.

Hi Robert,

I have a few thoughts about WD

In WD #29, why haven't the zombie heads in the box chewed up Rick's hand, which was in there with them?

Maybe they were--we didn't show inside the box. Or maybe they were stacked with their mouths AWAY from the head.

A nasty thought: if Lori's baby died in utero, would it turn zombie and chew her up?

It's possible.

What is the status of wildlife and animals in general? Are they all being chewed up like the deer we saw early on, or are some of them managing to coexist, or even *benefit* from the presence of zombies in their ecosystems (ie: ravens, rats)?

I'm sure it's a little bit of everything. I don't assume much of the wildlife is affected now that there are essentially REALLY SLOW humans without guns running around out there. I would think most wildlife would be better off in this situation.

I really hope the narrative trajectory might turn to the comparison of good and bad leadership (ala "Watership Down" and "Platoon") as I do think Rick has the potential to be a truly great, really heroic and visionary leader, and this travails could well make him an even better one! The loss of this right hand *is* seriously disabling (I had a busted hand a few years ago and that made life difficult enough), but maybe it will help him to use his heart and his intellect to make consistently better decisions.

Keep it coming!

Best wishes,
Ian C. Thomas

Yeah, Rick is definitely going to have some hard times ahead of him.

Ya Know..

10 years ago, when I was 16 I stopped buying comics. Completely Cold Turkey. Before that I was spending \$150 200 a month on comics. So I quit. Moved on to other things and whatnot

Worst mistake of your life... probably.

Then one day I see The Walking Dead. I Love Zombies. Always Have My favorite movie ever is the original Night of the Living Dead I used to love comics. So I took a chance and bought it

I Loved it! Bought every single issue so far (Currently #30). You gave me back the happy feelings I used to have when I was younger and comics were fun to read. Not the endless scavenger hunt to find every variant cover or special edition that ended up ruining comics for me Not the buying every comic included in the newest mega-crossover gimmick to snag collectors. Not the buying every comic that I will never read because it has a cover drawn by one of my favorite artists

No. You gave me back the art of READING a comic. Enjoying it from beginning to end and waiting so patiently yet eagerly for the next issue regardless of when it gets released.

Each time I see a new issue I tense up. I Gaspl I'm excited and can't wait to get home and read it. Even if it only lasts me 15 minutes, the wait is worth it.

Yes, your team is THAT good.

I just wanted to tell you that.

I only need to say thank you once. Thank You!

Derek Burns

You know--if you want it to last LONGER than 15 minutes... you could read the letters columns. But you'll probably never read THIS... so there's really nothing I can do for you.

Mr. Kirkman,

Good evening. So, I see a lot of letters from "Zombie fans" who love your book, which is the obvious result of reading a story on a topic you like, but not many from people like me who really never got into the whole "Zombie" thing. Don't get me wrong, it's not the "idea" I don't like but I think more the comedy that's usually associated. I was relieved to read that you will be keeping this title "dead serious."

I've gotten plenty of letters that start with "I don't like zombies--but I read this book" SO THERE!

Ya so, I never was into the Zombie thing really, and when the owner of my comic shop of choice (Mike from Main Street Comics in Jersey) told me I had to read it I was sure it was going to be something I read and then passed on. Wow, was I wrong. This is now at the top of my read list and I have Mike and you to thank for it! Well more you, but Mike played a role at least. :) What has worked for me is that this book has stayed away from the "horror" of the zombie animals and the aptly dressed cheerleader and athlete zombies. Not that I don't find them funny, but I am much more likely to be in for the long haul on a book that makes me think and analyze rather than giggle and move on. So thank you much for such a great book and for allowing me to finally appreciate a good "zombie tale."

I prefer serious zombie stories myself.

Also, because you print the majority of letters that contain criticism, a new reader might get the idea that this book isn't living up to its hype. With rave reviews, shout-outs on G4's Attack of the Show, and a generally positive word of mouth, one might think you've slipped. In my opinion, that couldn't be further from the truth. The book is AWESOME! Not just a good read, but one of the best I have read in my 15 years of comic book reading. The story has moved along just perfect so please ignore the "not enough zombie" stuff. A good story is one that not only entertains but captivates

Yeah, I've had people ask if the book is still doing well because I print all the negative mail. I mean, for every negative letter I print there's like five that just say "hey--love the book." I can't print THOSE in a letters column. How do I respond to the same thing 20 times? The negative mail is much more fun to respond to and it's more fun to read.

I love the cliffhanger endings and detailed story lines. This book, like very few others, (Girls by the Luna Brothers, Y the Last Man by BKV are good examples) tells a story that we become captivated with the more we learn about it. This genre has been done time and time again and yet we are still surprised when you reveal your latest plot twist, zombie related or not. That's hard to do with today's "over saturation of information," so kudos are due indeed

And what's a letter without numbered questions I ask?

1. Why is it that the interior art is black and white? Its great and all, just curious. Is the cost to color that much of a factor?

Actually, I think because of the cover stock we use and paper quality it costs MORE per issue to print than Invincible. I could make this book color and change the paper quality and SAVE money.

2. When do we get to find out how the whole Zombie thing started? (Not rushing you just needed a number 2)

Your loyal reader,
~Dan Murray

NEVER. Sorry.

Dear Mr.Kirkman (Sorry Gangsta Dick Cheney won the title of "Mr. Daddy" for this month)

I'd like to start by saying you and the whole team (Adlard, Rathburn and Wooton) are doing an AWESOME job! And the suspense in Issue 30, first making us wonder if the figure we saw running to the prison was actually Glenn was bad enough but saving the governor's response to Rick in the end of issue 29 till the last page, pure evil! And now for some questions!

1) Why hasn't natural Decomposition of the zombies set in? There is a Beautiful back cover on issue 28 wher a zombie girl appears to have maggots on one of her shoulders (My favorite back cover so far actually) and it got me thinking, why haven't we seen hordes of carrion feeders preying on the undead? Vultures, Maggots, Rats, and Ants, those kind of things?

We've seen a little of that. They're there.

2) Since finding the prison it doesn't seem like the main characters have had much of an interest in finding other people, which I thought would be one of their top priorities. Doesn't it make sense that by now they would have at least tried to secure a CB radio?

They've been busy.

3) When can we expect the return of Rick's zombie hand? Im hoping that by issue 50 it

makes its comeback leading a horde of severed limbs.

NO.

Well I think that's enough questions for one letter. And thanks again for an awesome read every month!

Sincerely,
Jeff Wiebe

Thanks--we'll keep trying to not suck.

Mr Kirkman,

(insert first time writing to a letters page remark)

The Walking Dead is probably the best comic book in the universe and I would just like to say thanks alot for all your hard work. A few questions...

1-With all that has taken place in the world of TWD why hasn't there been any talk of God? I understand that that's not what the book is about but still if I were Rick I couldn't help but wonder. Yet, in all fairness I guess they are to busy trying to survive to worry about the afterlife.

I'll try to mention it a few more times as the book goes on. It's been mentioned before--just not very much.

2-I don't mean this in a racist sort of way, but do you think it's possible that zombies prefer certain ethnicities or races because they taste better? I mean I'm not a cannibal or anything (although when I was younger I did go through a phase in which I ate my scabs). .

GOOD LORD. WHAT?

I think I've gone too far so I'll end things here by saying, keep up the good work.

(insert please print my letter remark)
Vin Gilante

You're a nut, Vin.

Now, immediately following this page you will find a PREVIEW for RED WARRIOR, a new graphic novel from Beckett and Image Comics. It's written by Jeff Amano and drawn by Andy MacDonald (of NYC MECH fame). While I haven't yet had the chance to read the book I will say that Jeff and Beckett have been putting out some fine, high quality books from Image over the last year or so and I'm sure this one is no different.

So check it out and if you like what you see--hunt the book down. It's actually ALREADY in stores, so it's really not much of a preview.

Enjoy!

ITEM! If you like this book and you've read a superhero comic before you should be reading INVINCIBLE. I write the book and it's drawn and colored by Ryan Ottley and Bill Crabtree. It's a swell book.

ITEM! Clayburn Moore, sculptor of the INVINCIBLE statue (in stores now) just sent me new photos of the Rick Grimes sculpture. It's looking DAMN AMAZING and I think you guys will ALL be happy with this one. I'll share photos here as soon as I can. It's GREAT! Should be available around summer time unless I'm mistaken.

ITEM! THE IRREDEEMABLE ANT-MAN just launched and the reviews are good. People seem to be liking this book and I certainly like it. Phil Hester, Ande Parks and Bill Crabtree are all killing in the penciling, inking and coloring departments. Issue 2 should be in stores by the time this issue ships so be on the lookout!

ITEM! My ULTIMATE X-MEN run is just heating up. We're smack dab in the middle of the senses shattering CABLE four-part arc and I'm telling you--this ones going to be huge. Miss it at your own risk!

ITEM! Buy BATTLE POPE--come on--you know you want it. Issue 11 just shipped... it's a Christmas story. You like Christmas don't you? You more than likely like JESUS too right? This book is for YOU! (yeah, you!)

ITEM! I think I'm done but I really like typing "ITEM!"

ITEM! Yeah... I'm done.

See you back here next month! (or sooner--seriously)

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Well, this issue was a bit intense, right? Sorry if you weren't expecting that. To be honest, I really wasn't expecting it either. It all seemed right to me as far as how the story was going. I mean, let's be honest--the Governor deserved it right?

Sure.

Let's answer a bit of mail, shall we?

Kirkman,
Just an idea. So many fans have asked how much time passes in between plot threads. And the baby is a great mechanism to show that. How about an issue with a ticking clock to show exactly how slow time passes?

Well, the thing about keeping it vague is that I don't have to be completely precise when it comes to the passage of time. It's just not in my best interest to lay it all out so readers can catch me make a mistake. I know roughly how much time is passing, and when, but making that public would just lead to confusion.

Walking Dead is by far the best character driven comic out there Please follow up on the idea of how society would develop when it is isolated. B gomy. Entertainment. Government. Religion hasn't been brought up much though. Thanx

Todd C. Herbst

You'll see plenty about religion before long. I've got to get through my gratuitous violence stage first.

Dead Crew,

Lots of fucking cool stuff happens in this issue (#31).

1) Eugene stabs Harold in the neck, no hesitation. Sweet!
2) Michonne beneads Eugene right after she kicks his twig & berries back whence they came from. Adlard delivers a sweet panel of Eugene's head-loss.

a) Michonne reunited with her sword; she gets her motherfuckin' groove on, boy! Yes!

3) The Governor shows his true colors by having two guys take Michonne down. He's so afraid of her, she has to be chained up for him to be in the same room. The Governor is a pussy. I can't wait for Michonne to chop his head clean off. Or better yet, she chops his twig & berries off; that would constitute karmic justice

She took care of the twig for sure--but I think the berries are still intact, for the most part.

A plea to the legion of TWD fans: Stop telling Robert what to do in upcoming stories. Obviously, he's created an incredible, dramatic world of stories without your input; he knows what he is doing.

I don't listen to anyone anyway, so it's really not a big deal.

Until Rick gets a chainsaw attached to his right hand, Make Mine, uh, (Kirk)man. Robert, you need to change your last name to begin with an 'M' to make the alteration work. Get to it

An irredeemable Walking Dead fan,
Sophea Uk

I'll get to work on that last name.

Yo, Zombie Dude!

Ok, just for the record I have TWD hard cover signed and numbered 18...SWEET!

Yes-I read it all the way through in one shot, yes-I loved the 3 page promo, yes-I wish a zombie would bite me so I could eat brains, yes-I have questions!

1 If they made a zombie James Bond movie would they make him only eat hot chicks?

I think that's in the by-laws.

2.Do you listen to white zombie when you write or go driving or ever? The first album was best! Lots of zombie movie sampling!

For whatever reason I never really listened to White Zombie. I had friends that did--and I always liked it--but I never bought a CD.

3 I totally agree that if this is ever going into film production that it should be a hardcore hbo/like tv series and it could be like you said, never ending. .mmm brains!

This is not a question.

4 what kind of monkey brains are safe to eat? or like a delacy in some countries?

Only the smart monkeys have brains that are safe to eat.

Sorry I got zombies on my brain...

Rob Steal

We all do. It's okay.

Hello Mr. Kirkman--

We in Canada love the Walking Dead and we especially love arena death matches. Issue thirty-one was sweet, #@*% another cliff hanger? Cripes it makes me feel like a junkie as soon as I finish reading an issue I'm already jonesin' for another fix.

That's the idea!

I tried Day of the dead, Omega man, 28 Days later, nothing fills/stops the cravings. The recolored Battle Pope helps, though.

That makes next to no sense... but if it gets you reading, all the better!

I work at a comic store and the trades are great to get the kids hooked they read one then come back for 2-4 the next like clock work then the weak willed ones usually succumb to the issues. Thanks for the awesome book!

From the frozen north
Riley Rossmo

Thanks for reading--and writing!

Dear Kirkman,

Kind of a down issue this time. I can't believe that the 'Guvnor' was so stupid as to trust Michonne! And where's the other guy? Where's Glenn? I know about the Irredeemable Ant-Man, but I think even you have the character all wrong! Ant-Man

should be more like Spider-Man, with the proportionate abilities of an ant! Right? Spiders are pretty damn small, but does Peter Parker shrink?! Course not. Ants are generally BLACK, too, not red. I'm still not sure who the new Ant-Man is gonna be though. Back to TWD. I think the best thing would be for the prison population and the Woodbury population to live in harmony! So, uh, have them build a tunnel or something, between Woodbury and the prison. This series always makes you feel some powerful emotions.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

How boring would it be if the characters just went to Woodbury for Thanksgiving or something? That would be totally lame.

You need to talk to Stan Lee if you dislike the whole shrinking Ant-Man thing. Sorry.

Robert,

Just wanted to check in and let you know how good the current WD arc is. Can't wait to see where we're going on this ride. On a different note, I really enjoy the letter column, and I think its pretty cool that you print so many of them. I like hearing readers ideas, questions and suggestions as well as your responses. This is my second time writing to you (1st one was published, thank you very much) and I'm not sure if you have ever covered this or not. Have you considered another ongoing title set in the Walking Dead universe? I mean whole different set of people in another city altogether. I know you did that small follow up in the Image Christmas 05 special, I just thought that there might be some room in the backdrop you created for additional groups of people dealing with Zombies in other locations. Just a thought. Talk you soon. Keep up the good work. Tell Charlie to keep it up too.

Clyde in NJ

A second series with new characters isn't the worst idea in the world. There was a time early on where I had actually considered the idea. In the end I decided against it because I think expanding the book into a line of books would eventually weaken the popularity of this series and hurt sales and possibly sabotage this book. I want to write this book for a good long time. I'm not after the quick cash, I just want to tell my stories.

So yeah, only one book for the time being.

I have written in before and you published me, so fingers crossed I make the cut again... I wanted to email you to tell you about some zombie paraphernalia that I'm sure you already know about

1. Dead Rising on XBOX 360 is amazing

I'll probably check that out one day.

2. Max Brooks came out with his next zombie book, World War Z - An Oral History of the Zombie War. Haven't read it yet but the Zombie Survival Guide is a piece of literature that will save a man's life.

It's on my to read list.

Well, that's it. Honestly, who makes a list with only two items. By the way I love how you are putting illustrations of zombies on the back covers of your comics now. I would totally do the chick on the back of Issue 31. She might be a biter though...

Eric Baca
Zombie Conservationist Extraordinaire

Did you just admit that you would have sex with a dead woman? I bet you're not glad I printed this letter NOW!

Robert,

Just read 31. Michonne rocks, don't kill her off for a while. I'm looking forward to learning more about her back story Her conduct in the fight...getting to see her make the Governor's life hell before she gets her final revenge is nice. Can't wait for her to get that bastard.

Hopefully you liked this issue.

The Walking Dead is like crack. Everyone I recommend it to gets hooked on it. Letter Hacks is one of the best letter columns in comics right now, tied with The Goon and BPRD as my favorite. Invincible kicks ass, too, and as a catholic school dropout and former altar boy I can't help but love Battle Pope.

As an Ant-man fan, I was wondering if the new series is going to be an ongoing or a mini? Looking forward to it either way.

Oh, it's an ongoing series. Hopefully it'll go for a good long time.

A few zombie movie recommendations (since you asked and all!):

Cemetery Man aka Dellamorte Dellamore (excellent surreal black comedy featuring Anna Falchi's boobs)
Versus (karate/yakuza/samurai/zombie flick from Japan)
Wild Zero (Japanese punk rock zombiefest starring the band Guitar Wolf)
Dead Alive aka Braindead (Peter Jackson's best movie and the goriest movie of all time)
Return of the Living Dead ("Send more Paramedics"...'nuff said)
Dawn of the Dead '79 (not obscure, but my favorite)

Thanks for hours of awesome zombie goodness and keep up the good work.

Brad Parker

All good recommendations, thanks.

It appears the stars have aligned and I must write, for in the last issue you asked for favourite obscure zombie movies and boy have I got an obscure one for ya! Plus you seemed to dig the chick letters so here's another for you. First the gratuitous "OMG I love you man". I do. You are a sick and deviant mind and your work, and the work of the rest of the Walking Dead team of course, is incredible. The black and white style is amazing and the perfect choice for such a graphic story. Letting the imagination fill in the colour delivers far more gore then you would ever really put to paper (or may be that's just me...). I love the fact that the storyline is really exploring how the most dangerous thing we can possibly face in any time of crisis is each other.

Guess I'll throw a Zombie question out there before I wrap this up (everybody's doin' it). I'll skip the "give me upcoming plot details" part of the question. I hope that's OK, but I kinda thought I'd let you tell the story. Here goes; Most plagues have symptoms other then your main one and also a certain percentage of people who seem to be immune. Why do you think we don't tend to see this in zombie plague stories?

Bad writing? On my part at least.

Here comes the obscurity, are you ready for it? My favourite obscure zombie flick is INTERCESSOR: ANOTHER ROCK AND ROLL NIGHTMARE. Why you might ask (and believe me if you had seen it you would ask)? Because I'm in it. I'm the Cop Zombie! I got to eat latex intestines and even had a couple of lines. It was a lot of fun to be part of something so very "B" and to be a creature that I love so much.

That's all she wrote,
Lisa Hudson

Man, I had to read this whole damn letter so you could promote some movie you're in. Jerk. Oh, well, any letter from a female reader is always worth printing.

Mr K,

That Whore!!!

That disease-ridden infection-spreading Whore!!!

I SEE that Mr. A's doing a little moon-lighting for a company that he once drew a series about dead space-guys in deep-doo. Are YOU not paying Mr. A. enough to keep him happy, Mr. K.?

Adlard get's far more fish heads for working on this book than he does for that other company. And I hit him with a stick WAY less when he starts to misbehave.

Before you know it, Mr. A. will be going over to the other big industnes, like Dark Horse, Marvel, or even D C (Dead Company - hey I made a funny!) !!!

Adlard has been in this biz for almost 47 years and has done work at all these companies. He knows where the love is. Don't worry.

Look at the preview art of Rock Bottom! It looks like Mr. A. drew it while he was on crack, or lsd!

Is that a good thing?

If I didn't know it any better, it's some of his best art since THE X-FILES!!!! If this is true, then Mr. A.'s holding back on WD! You are NOT paying him enough, Mr. K.!!!

Eh, what can you do.

WD-31. Another dead-on terror-rfic suspense-filled issue. Michone (everyone's favorite schizophrenic or multiple-disordered person) on the amok! Poor Guv'nor, he's so dead, he doesn't even know it yet. You almost feel sorry for the poor bastard.

A most.

Poor Rick. No right hand. How is he's gonna do you-know-what at night? Ask his wife?

Sorry.

I haven't seen this mentioned in the letter pages of late, so I don't know if you or anyone knows it or not. The movie that inspired you to make WD, "28 Days Later" has spawned a sequel - "28 Weeks Later" due out in 2007.

28 Days Later is not the movie that inspired me to make The Walking Dead. I'd been working on the book for a few months when I heard about that movie. That damn opening scene in the first issue was pure coincidence.

Wouldn't it be cool to see two more sequels? "28 Months Later" and "28 Years Later"? Might this inspire more WD spinoffs? Say geographically instead of timely? WD: Europe; WD: South America; WD: Africa or Asia or Australia? Might have to get different artists for each spinoff. Mr. A.'s too busy whoring himself. ;-)

Right, I need the sequel to a movie to inspire me to do spin-offs of my book. I never would have thought of that if someone hadn't decided to do a sequel to 28 Days Later.

Sigh.

17 more issues until Oversize Omnibus Vol. 2. Work faster. Will WD X-mas special be reprinted in Vol. 2?

Yes, it will be.

44 more issues until final issue of WD # 75. I know you want to do 300 - 500 issues of WD, but does Mr. A.? Do 75 issues first then decide whether to continue or not. Nobody lives forever 'less they're dead.

What?

Got to go now. My dead dog's eyeing me funny. Guess the slaughtered cow wasn't fresh enough.

Thanks for another great issue of WD

HAND, SOI, and TTYL,
Tom Fitzpatrick

You're welcome.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

Doing a fantastic job as always on the book. As far as other zombie movies go, here goes...

- 1-THE DEAD NEXT DOOR Pretty ambitious for being shot on super 8
- 2-ZOMBIE HOLOCAUST-How can you go wrong with Zombies AND Cannibals. Some of the lamest dialogue ever but gory.
- 3-NIGHTMARE CITY-Unintelligent zombies who can use automatic weapons,fun!
- 4-BLIND DEAD films-Great stuff. Zombie knights templar
- 5 EROTIC NIGHTS OF THE LIVING DEAD Don't even ask...D'Amato trying to merge horror with hardcore pornography
- 6-DELLAMORTE DELLAMORE-Fantastic! Soavi does a great job here of adapting the Dylan Dog italian comic book.
- 7 BURIAL GROUND-Horrible,but gory. Plus where else will you see an actor playing a mother's kid son older than the actress playing the mother!
- 8-HELL OF THE LIVING DEAD-A bad rip off of Dawn,right down to the music
- 9-All the Fulci Zombie movies,GATES OF HELL,THE BEYOND,HOUSE BY THE CEMETARY,ZOMBIE,and ZOMBIE 3. I'm sure there are others,but that's all I can think of right now...

Jeff Baughman

Thanks for the list, Jeff!

Hey Robert,

Just dropping another line, letting you know how much I'm digging the new direction the story's going in. It's a nice departure from the Romero-esque prison scene. Not that the prison's a bad setting (far from it), but the fortress mentality of these characters, while not unrealistic, reminds me too much of the sub-plots for a half dozen other zombie stories out there. To tell you the truth, it's the little touches in this town that I'm really enjoying. The scene with the screaming mother was particularly telling: bitch and scream all you want, but the men with the guns are the ones in control. Depending on your political bent, you could draw all kinds of metaphors from that page alone

I'm sure I'll get angry letters from people doing just that.

Anyway, enough film school bull. A few comments, a few questions

An issue or two back, one of your readers seemed to have a thunderous hard-on for the AK-47. This, of course, brings all kinds of uncomfortable images to mind (I wonder- does Charleton Heston have a pin-up calendar?) Regardless, the AK is a terrible weapon. Sure, you could beat a herd of cows to death with the thing, throw it in the mud,

drop it in saltwater, and set it on fire and it'll keep firing...but does it fire accurately? Far from it. Unlike the M 16, the AK is a crudely machined bit of equipment, and when it fires the recoil causes the entire assembly to clatter like a loose set of keys, throwing your accuracy way off after the first shot. The rifle can also be fired on full auto, leading too many users to give in to temptation and uselessly "rock and roll." I'm not at all into guns, but I've had the chance to fire an AK, and I know enough about the weapons' history to know that the rifle would be a poor choice for the zombie survivalist. Martinez has the right idea, when he tells Rick he's helping him escape. A single shot, scoped rifle would be the most logical choice.

I'm totally canceling that AK-47 I've had on layaway. Thanks for the advice.

I don't know if you've addressed this before, but when exactly does this story take place? The only reason I ask is that if the plague began after the invasion of Iraq, it'd go a long way to explaining why you don't see more military hardware or zombies in uniform.

I imagine issue 1 took place around October of 2003 and we're roughly 7 or 8 months after that by now, creeping into summer of 2004.

When you get the chance, you should check out "Word War Z." Great book, kind of a "Longest Day" version of a zombie plague.

It's on my to-read list.

Sorry 'bout the last letter, didn't think you'd throw up. But you know, zombie feces and al.... it kind of makes sense

Oh, one last thing. Rick needs a hook. A big, shiny, fuck off chrome job that'd make Peter Pan soil himself. And an eye patch. I guess a parrot might be too much to hope for.

Looking forward to more carnage,
C S

P.S. Tell Charlie, Cliff and Rus they're doing fine work.

Charlie, Cliff and Rus--I just wanted to say, you're doing fine work!

Dear Robert Kirkman,

I'm writing this mail in order to want you to know that you have lots of fans in Turkey :)

That's cool to know. I'm a HUGE fan of turkey (note lack of capitalization).

In Turkey we do not have local comic book shops everywhere like you guys have so it's really difficult to track down the new comics. That's why I happened to know your awesome masterpiece late enough to miss few first issues (to be honest, I missed nearly 20 issues). But in Turkey we have proverbs saying that *It's never too late to mend and A fault confessed is half redressed*. So I began to track the Walking Dead from 19th issue. From there on I add a copy of "Walking Dead" to my shopping cart every month. At this point I must thank the DCP team for helping me to cover the missed issues

Wow--I'm sorry it's such a chore to get books over there. Don't sweat coming onto the book late. What matters most is that you're here now.

From my childhood to my adulthood I have a keen interest in walking dead stuff. I have watched the Romero's quadrilogy more than a couple of times (do not know the number exactly). Like Master Romero, in the Walking Dead you have created the atmosphere so good that when reading there were sometimes that I have totally collapsed. More over the "human psychology in the shitty conditions" that you reflect make me to think once more about the survival ethics. What I am trying to say in short is you are genius :) Thank you so much! Not only you but all the team!

That's all from Turkey now.

Lot's of respects,

Can Kartoglu

P.S: I have enjoyed reading "Marvel Zombies", that was F-U-N

Glad you liked it.

Dearest Dr. Kirkman,

I've awarded you with a doctorate in undead studies, uh, yeah, i can do that. I'd knight you if I could...thought that i'd first write this letter the same as everyone else, and of course that includes a list, but mines different, i guess; 1. First-time writer! wow! i never thought i'd write to a comic book, yet here i am! 2. props to my LCS, Cheryl's Comics and Toys in Charleston, WV. 3. I've been reading since X issue and now i've got 'em all, it's like crack! 4. The Walking Dead is the best book out there and everything you touch turns to gold and all the artwork is amazing in it's harsh starkness....then the complaints come, scheduling,

when's she having the damn baby?, people look too much alike, and the like, you've read it at LEAST as many times as i have

I've always read the letters and have been entertained, yr answers seem to give an insight into yr genial personality, and it is nice after all the horror show of the last pages, and it gave me another reason to keep reading when i otherwise would've already had it bagged and boarded. I'd always considered writing letter hacks and writing the shortest letter ever. "no more letters, just more story", i would've never done it, because you see, I've never written to a comic book, i'm one of those people that you've turned into comic readers...but, uh....the reason i'm writing is i had a problem: #30. after waiting forever for glenn to return to the prison, as the ad with the cover in #29 shows, i know i know, no one ever said it was glenn ..but c'mon, a wounded little asian kid, vs. fighting linebacker...that ain't tyrese. i like being fooled though so that's cool. My problem? Where's my Rathburn back cover? Kill whoever you want (i like Glenn though), but the backcovers are just the greatest...especially #25. And i know you (and Image) have an opportunity to showcase new and upcoming comics, and i see the connection...but whatabout the million letters that i love to complain about?

Drive fast and take chances,

Jimmy Hunt

The back covers took a month off to make room for the Criminal preview. I thought it was worth it... but I have a deep festering hatred for all things Cliff Rathburn. That man is far more evil than any of you will ever know.

Dear Kirk-THE-Man,

I just read your interview with CBR News where you mention zombie stories are meant to show the changes that would happen to society over time. I couldn't agree more, and I love that you realize the story potential that you are doing with TWD.

With the unnecessary praise done, let's get down to business. In TWD #29, the Governor gives his daughter a hand to eat, presumably Rick's. In the first panel it's clearly a left hand, but it was Rick's right hand that was cut off. In the next panel, it magically becomes a right hand. Even though it's implied that the hand is Rick's, I suppose you could say the first hand was from a person in the helicopter crash, given to the daughter first off panel, and the second hand shown is Rick's. I doubt I'm the first to notice this, but what do you say, do I get a no-prize? Or how about a decayed prize, expired prize, etc.

Until I see a Battle Pope, Capes, Invincible, Science Dog, TWD crossover (actually I'd love to see that),
-efcufochr

Your no prize is in the mail.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I always figured US creators and other related lifeforms would be glad and surprised to hear their work is read and appreciated so far away from home... and I all I ever get from you is a "so you're European, big deal". Bendis actually corrected my list of his Spanish-published work once, when I wrote to congratulate him about it. He CORRECTED it.

Can a bald American be any more arrogant than that? I guess he doesn't realize I could kill him and still get a year of pre-scripted Bendis books, which means he's not completely safe from my wrath.

So no list for you, Mr. Kirkman.

So you're European? Big deal!

I will, however, tell you a little story about my friends and co-workers. I've been following your work on its original American format since TWD's first issue. When it started getting published in Spain (5 issues at a time, almost one book every six months -- can't you fix that somehow?) and I saw the first issue while hanging out in a local comic store with other people I suffered something that vaguely resembled an asthma attack, which surprisingly got several of my friends to buy the book. Well, that and the gorgeous black and white art.

Flash forward a year or two (your book really comes out too slowly here, Mr Kirkman), when a friend of mine went to London with his girlfriend. There, he saw an unpublished book of TWD and carelessly took a peek inside. This had two effects:

1) My friend saw Rick with his hand cut off. A sizable force of security guards and worried girlfriends had to prevent him from gouging his eyeballs out with a Wolverine action figure.

It's easier with a Spider-Man figure.

2) I finally had somebody to talk to about the last story arc of the book. I was dying here. I knew all these important things about rape and mutilation while everybody else was still talking about how cool Rick's speech at the end of the last book was. I feel much better now, thanks

So there you go. Greetings from Spain. By the way, this eyeless friend

of mine also loved Marvel Zombies. I didn't read it when he did. Now that I've had to survive months of him randomly bringing it up in the middle of unrelated conversations I think I never will. Nothing personal, of course.

Keep it up. Faster.
Néstor Forján

We're trying to do the books faster here in the states. As far as foreign reprints go, I don't have much control over that stuff. It's pretty much up to the foreign publishers when the books ship.

Mr Kirkman,

Big fan of Walking Dead. A friend gave me the tpb of the first 6 issues and I've been hooked since. B g Romero fan (once slept in a car in a rest stop in Kenosha Wisconsin to meet him) and big zombie fan. Knew I liked your stuff after reading the book and Marvel Zombies. But when I read in the letter column that you hated bendis, I knew you are special. :) What do you think of Civil War?

I don't hate Bendis, in fact, I love him. I just like to give him shit in the letters columns of my books because I know that bald troll will more than likely never read them.

Just to jump off on a tangent, I think Brian had a pretty big hand in getting me work at Marvel which was a big kick start to my career at a time with The Walking Dead and Invincible were just starting to take off. Brian is a great guy and he's helped me out a lot over the years.

That doesn't change that fact that he's so silly looking.

While reading issue #30, I was thinking about something. When the group was on the tower taking out zombies it made me think of a thought I had one time in regards to the original Dawn of the Dead. Just as a mental exercise I was trying to "correct" any mistakes the group made. One of the ideas I had was to go out and kill some of the surrounding zombies just to thin the crowd and to give a warning to anyone coming by. Some zombie heads on lances might discourage others wanting to take away the mall. I was going to email you this idea, but in the letter column you mention the idea that none of the group had ever seen a zombie movie. Guess it just goes to show great minds think alike. :)

Enjoying the series, can't wait to see what happens when Rick and Michonne get out of town and back to the prison. If I may make one suggestion, I really liked the "cast so far" head shots & short descriptions you had at the end of the book. I realize it got very very long and unwieldy, but you don't have to include everyone. As much as I liked little Duane Jones (since I was a late comer, did anyone get that in joke/homage?), you don't need to include everyone. Maybe just the crew and "special guest stars" (as they used to say on TV shows). Interesting use of the prison as a setting, never would have thought of it but it makes sense.

The character list will be back shortly. If not next issue... then soon. I just need to take the time to update it.

Well, in closing, keep up the good work and keep the zombies up also. One last question, since you have an "ensemble" cast, do you like any of the ensemble dramas on television like Lost or Battlestar Galactica?

Best,
Butch Rosenbalm

I'm a huge fan of LOST. I know I'm going to LOVE Battlestar Galactica when I finally get around to buying the DVDs but I haven't had a chance to pick them up yet.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Awesome job. You are an inspiration. I'm a writer myself but not for comics. Anyways, one thing that really bugs me is, are you planning on including Morgan and Duane Jones in any future issues? Like I always imagined Rick and his group meeting up with the Jones' and them having their own group. Maybe for a battle against a huge zombie army? I don't know, I'm just talking out of my ass. But seriously, I would love to see the Jones' come back and I'm sure I'm not alone in this

Awesomely sincere,
Will C

I want them back in the book more than anyone, trust me. I always intended to bring them back. It's just taking me a while to figure out a believable way to get them back into the book. It'll happen, though.

Damn you, Kirkman.

I've been an avid comic book fan my entire life. Most of my childhood was spent with my nose in an Avengers book, or something involving the X-Men. As I grew into my teens and beyond, I kept up with my

favorite mags. Eventually it got to the point where I just waited for the trade paperbacks to come out, so I could get great lumps of the story all at once.

That's how it's been for me- wait till the trade comes out. I remember my brother exclaiming how somebody named Onslaught was going to kill everyone but the X-Men. I was tempted to pick up individual issues, but I held off. When Grant Morrison came to write the X-Men I was excited, but did I pick up individual issues? Nope. I waited, and lo and behold, the trades came out on a regular basis and I kept up with the story. When Infinite Crisis, and Identity Crisis before it, blasted onto the shelves I remained in control and isolated myself from my favorite websites, lest I discover something that would ruin the story when I read it in its entirety. Currently, even as intrigued as I am about Marvel's current Civil War storyline, I'm waiting. I'd rather read it in a collected volume.

So I say again, damn you, Kirkman.

My brother let me know about The Walking Dead a couple of years back. He recommended it highly. As he's as much a connoisseur of zombie fiction as I am (my brother and I were both traumatized by a young viewing of "Dawn of the Dead", and to this day do not go into malls without scoping out defensive positions first), I knew I had to check this book out. Luckily the first trade had already been published, so I picked it up-and was absolutely enthralled. Clearly this was a book written for zombie fans by a zombie fan. It had everything I wanted- gruesome hordes of the undead, great artwork and characters that were so well-written I caught myself actually feeling wretched when one or the other got bitten. I still mist up when I re-read the first trade and see Jim's long, slow decline into zombiehood. That's good stuff, man.

And yet I still held out, stubborn cuss that I am, from buying the individual issues. I eagerly snatched up the trades when they came out, and at least the first three ended story arcs so I didn't have to wait to see how a cliffhanger resolved itself

Everything was going so well until you threw that damned helicopter into the mix. My brother bought me the latest trade for my birthday, and I immediately excluded myself from the rest of my family to tear through it. A helicopter? Cool. It stands to reason that others are out there with aircraft. Rick's group couldn't be the only ones left. Going out to check the crash with riot gear? Makes perfect sense- I've been reading about the group's adventures in the prison for a year now, so why didn't it ever occur to me that they should have riot gear laying around someplace?

Then they got to Woodbury. And they met the Governor. And Rick's hand was chopped off, and Michonne was raped and brutalized. And I realized the bloody trade paperback had less than 20 pages left. And then I realized something else: there was no way I would be able to leave these characters in limbo until the next trade came out.

So I say one last time: damn you, Kirkman.

I just bought issue #31, and half-read the thing in the car on the way home while I was driving because I couldn't wait to see what happens next. Marvel was unable to suck me back in to buying issues month by month. DC couldn't do it either. But your story about Rick and his people trying to survive a zombie apocalypse did it. Now I'm going to be one of those people awaiting your book each and every month, gathering in front of the local comic book shop the day it's realized, ready to devour your story as soon as I can sink my teeth into it... hey, that sounds kind of familiar, huh?

You write one mean story, Mr. Kirkman, and you've hooked me. I can't wait to see what happens next.

Thanks for that
Rob Casaletta

Cool. The more people I can pull from the TPBs to get on the singles the better. You don't want to miss out on these wildly entertaining letters columns, right?

The Walking Dead changed my life!

Okay, maybe that was a little dramatic but I can say that I have no idea how I didn't read this book before now. I loved Marvel Zombies and I am really digging your work on Ultimate X-Men (the Shi'ar as a Scientology-like religion is brilliant) but until last week I had never picked up a copy of Walking Dead or Invincible. A friend of mine had been telling me that I really should be reading your other books. So I got my hands on collections of Walking Dead and Invincible and I am loving them so freaking much. I read through Walking Dead in a few days - I just could not put it down - and now I am on the second trade of Invincible and I think I have a new favorite super-hero book

Thanks for coming around--but you only read my Marvel stuff for a while? FOR SHAME!

But back to my homeboy Rick and the rest of the walking dead - I am so in love with this book and these characters (even though you keep killing them). This has to be the most ingenious use of zombies in recent memory (Shaun of the Dead coming in second). Your focus on the emotional impact on the survivors gives the book such depth and soul. I can't say enough about it. And so far Invincible is the best super-hero book I have read in a long time. Your writing has really

inspired me to get off my butt and pick up a pen. A friend of mine and I have an idea for a story for some time and reading your work has really inspired me to move forward with this.

I guess my only questions for now are:

1. Do you have a planned ending for Walking Dead? How long to you plan the series to run?

I would like the series to go on as long as humanly possible. I'd be happy to do 300 issues. No planned ending in mind. I'll wrap it up when it's time... until then, I'll play it by ear.

2. Any chance Rick is going to pull an Ash and fix a chainsaw to his newly made stub? Perhaps a boomstick?

No chance.

3. Would you suggest self-publishing or trying to get published as a new writer?

-- Chris Gray

Yes, but it's very difficult. You need to be sure that it's something you want to do.

My greatest praises to you, Lord Kirkman,

TWD is by far the greatest comic book I have ever read. Infact, it was the first one I started reading religiously, and now is the only one I can afford on my meager paycheck. I got a girlfriend, so now I have to cut back on my comic book budget, but TWD will always be bought, every month. I've been pimping TWD to all my freinds. Enough praises for you. Now for Questions.

1) What about those two dudes back in Rick's Home town, are they alive, will we even know? Will they show back up!

See previous letter.

2) Tyreese said he wouldn't give up looking for Rick till he "See his body," too bad that dead body would try to eat him... Just thought that was funny

Good point.

3) What's up with the Governors family! Why are they Zombies!? The doctor said something about it, but it just raised more questions than it answered!

All will be revealed in time.

4) Rick only has one hand, any chance he'll pull an Ash Williams and replace it with a chainsaw? I know your all thinking this, just no one had the balls to ask.

No chance.

5) Still about Rick's hand, the hand that was severed, that was the hand he broke to hell on the guys face, right? That means he still has one good hand... right?! I looked though the whole book, making sure, over and over, but i'm still not content.

Yes, his bad hand was the one that was severed.

6) How old is Carl now? He's acting more older than I thought he was, taking care of his mom and all... Is it just forced maturity, in an apocalyptic world, or is he like 13 now?

Only 7 months or so have passed since the first issue. Carl is just growing up due to the situation he's in.

Well, that's all I have time for. Goodbye Kirkman, and Kudos to Marvel Zombies.

-TheWordSayer

Thanks!

I just wanted to thank you for the free retailer hardcover. I for one am a big fan of the walking dead and sell the fuck out of it to anybody that listens to my recommendations. even though I own the trades I will be keeping the hardcover for myself (unless this thing goes for big money on eBay, like new car money!) Thank you again keep up the good work and I will keep selling it. in other words no more 4 month gaps that kind of stuff hurts us all.

Mike Shianabargar
Ast.Manger of
Amazing Fantasy
Tinley Park IL

Cut me some slack, Mike... there has NEVER been a four month gap. I may be wrong but as I recall there was never more than a two month gap between any issue. I hope you enjoy the hardcover, though. I appreciate all that you and other retailers have done to support this book.

Mr. Kirkman:

I'm a very big fan of the Walking Dead series. I really do enjoy what you are doing with it. I read the first three trades & then I decided to go monthly. I simply did that because I just couldn't wait for the next trade six months down the line. But, I'm afraid to say that Walking Dead #31 will be my last monthly issue. It's not that I don't like the series. I really do. But, the duration of the delays between the monthly issues is getting out of hand. I find it hard to sit down and enjoy the story. Getting 22 pages once every 6 to sometimes 8 weeks just kills the enjoyment of the story. I will though continue to purchase the trades. It was the trades that made me a fan. It was the monthly issues that cooled my interest. I will miss those great letter pages. But, what can I do?

Please do keep up the great work. After all, I will be following the trade paperback editions.

AA

The delays have not been the most ideal of situations, true, but hopefully in the coming months that will really, and truly be behind us. I got hit with a number of things this year that slowed me down, one of which was the birth of my first child. The Marvel books continued to ship on time because I only have to turn in a script for them. I do far more behind the scenes stuff on my Image books and that's where the delays came in. I'm getting a better handle on it now. The schedule should be rock-solid throughout 2007... we'll see.

Greetings from the Great White North,

In my younger days I was what you might call a comicaholic. My parents took me out every Saturday to the local variety store to buy my weekly fix of Spiderman, Batman, Swamp Thing, Creepy, Superman, and so on.

Good parents.

But time marches on and I gave up my collection and moved on to novels and movies, leaving behind the illustrated worlds of my youth.

I married and had kids, and unlike me they never had the opportunity to read the comics that brought me so much joy.

Then one day on Ebay I noticed a Trade Paperback that caught my eye. It was the first collection of The Walking Dead, and from that time I've been hooked. I bought the next collection and then one title became two, two became three and... well you can guess the rest. I now subscribe to tons of titles and have made my online subscription service very happy. Even my kids are hooked now, and I have to defend my stash against the little stinkers, otherwise I'm searching for missing issues.

But by far my favorite comic is still The Walking Dead.

I find it as stimulating as any novel I've read, and as addicting as any TV show or movie series I've come across. Without the characters and story lines you've developed, I and my family would never have experienced what I feel is the rebirth of the comic industry.

Bravo people!!!

It's always nice to hear about this book getting people back into comics. That's probably the most rewarding kind of praise this book could get. Comics are a fantastic form of entertainment (my favorite) and it pains me that so many people have lost their way and given it up.

And I just finished reading issue #31.

WTF do you mean... a new chapter?!

Don't you dare kill off Rick!!
I just about crapped myself when you cut off his hand!!

Always a fan,
Frank Sperberg.

Wait a minute--DON'T kill Rick? You don't want me to kill him? Crap.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

In the hardcover of TWD you mention that "Night of the Living Dead" somehow fell into the public domain. I just saw a TV interview with the director, George Romero, and he answered that question. He was originally going to call the movie "Night of the Flesh Eaters." When he changed the title, the distributor changed the original title to NOTLD, but forgot to put the copyright notice on the film prints. At that time copyright law required it. Thus, lacking the notice, Romero eventually lost the copyright. The more you know.

Quick question so this isn't just a history lesson:

1. Will you ever deliberately release something of TWD into the public domain?

-Anthony Benitez

Why would I release any part of The Walking Dead into public domain? It'll be there in a hundred years or so anyway... but seriously, the zombies are in public domain (and plenty of people are making money on those) so there's really nothing else to give. Odd question. Thanks for the info on NOTLD though, I didn't know about all that.

I should probably take the time to update this shilling section below... but it's late and I'm tired. I'll do it next month!

ITEM! If you like this book and you've read a superhero comic before you should be reading INVINCIBLE. I write the book and it's drawn and colored by Ryan Ottley and Bill Crabtree. It's a swell book.

ITEM! Clayburn Moore, sculptor of the INVINCIBLE statue (in stores now) just sent me new photos of the Rick Grimes sculpture. It's looking DAMN AMAZING and I think you guys will ALL be happy with this one. I'll share photos here as soon as I can. It's GREAT! Should be available around summer time unless I'm mistaken.

ITEM! THE IRREDEEMABLE ANT-MAN just launched and the reviews are good. People seem to be liking this book and I certainly like it. Phil Hester, Ande Parks and Bill Crabtree are all killing in the penciling, inking and coloring departments. Issue 2 should be in stores by the time this issue ships so be on the lookout!

ITEM! My ULTIMATE X-MEN run is just heating up. We're smack dab in the middle of the senses shattering CABLE four-part arc and I'm telling you--this one's going to be huge. Miss it at your own risk!

ITEM! Buy BATTLE POPE--come on--you know you want it. Issue 11 just shipped... it's a Christmas story. You like Christmas don't you? You more than likely like JESUS too right? This book is for YOU! (yeah, you!)

ITEM! I think I'm done but I really like typing "ITEM!"

ITEM! Yeah... I'm done.

See you back here next month!

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Don't worry, we're hard at work on issue 35... so you shouldn't have to wait more than a few weeks before you find out what's going on.

Heh.

Now, As I type this issue 32, 33 and now 34 have shipped monthly or better (unless the holidays hold this issue up at all). I just wanted to point it out because while everyone likes to point out and complain about lateness... even when we're BARELY late, very few people send in letters that say "hey--you're on time, great!"

I'm not patting ourselves on the back just yet. We'll see how many issues we've put out by the end of 2007 before any medals are issued, but I think we're getting a handle on things and the worst is definitely behind us.

We did only put out nine issues in 2006... which sucks. Sorry about that.

We're shooting for 12 or MORE in 2007. You'll see.

NOW, while this issue is going to ship AFTER Christmas (and the other holidays), it's still well before the holiday season here so I'm going to be giving you all a little gift.

For YOU we're running last year's The Walking Dead story from the Image Holiday Special 2005. It was printed in the BOOK ONE hardcover that's out, but the majority of you single issue buyers may have missed the

Holiday Special and probably didn't buy that hardcover... so I'm running it here so you don't miss out.

It's a Morgan and Duane story--for those of you who remember issue 1 and wonder what they've been up to. ENJOY!

And my Christmas present for ME this year is a shorter letters column... so I can spend more time working on OTHER stuff... and maybe even spending some time with my family. I hope I get an iPod this year!

Okay... I might as well answer a FEW letters. Let's see what we got here.

HOLY CRAP!!! This book is so good. The escape was great, and I felt so bad for the doctor, but I guess someone had to bite it...and Michonne heading for revenge, that was sweet...and I really wanted to see that town just get torn apart, with someone letting zombies loose inside, but that's not Rick's style, so it makes sense that that wouldn't happen...but that doesn't mean Michonne won't... anyway, questions

1. What's going on back at the prison?

As you can see at the end of this very issue... nothing good.

2. What's gonna happen to this town? And will we see it?

We haven't seen the last of Woodbury by a long shot... don't worry. Woodbury and all the people still there will play a rather large role in the next year or two of stories in this book. I think you'll all like where this is going.

Anyway, that's about all I can think of...only 264 more issues to outrun Cerebus...and I'm hoping to be here until the end...

Mr Lumpstastic

I'm hoping to be here until the end! We'll see how far we go. I'd love to be doing this book a decade from now.

Dear Ye Ol' Grizzly One,

Thanks for not making Glenn a total pussy. I appreciate it.

Yeah, Glenn's been a LITTLE wimpy in the last few issues but he's going to be getting some redemption later on. Glenn is one of my favorite characters in the book.

It seems like Walking Dead is losing a bit of its unpredictability. When I first read it, it seemed that anyone could go at anytime (and they did). Lately however, it seems like there are a few "sacred cows" i.e. Rick, Lori, Tyreese, and to a lesser extent Hershel. It would be nice to see a few more shocker deaths to make the reader less comfortable

Man you guys are hard to please! I'm either killing too many characters or not enough. There are NO sacred cows in this book. Just because there hasn't been many people die in the last few issues doesn't mean certain characters are safe. You'll see... you'll ALL see.

That being said I'm still enjoying the hell out of this book. I think the prison idea was just about the most incredible idea in modern Zombie lore. I would like to see a few more of the minor characters get their moment in the spotlight, like Billy (that's Hershel's kid right??)

Yes, and I've been meaning to do more with him for some time. Don't worry, everyone will get at least a brief moment to shine at some point in the series... unless I kill them.

Couple of questions for ya.

1) Any chance of Lori just having a normal healthy baby? Or is it destined to be born Zombie-fied?

That remains to be seen. She may even give birth to that baby some day.

2) Any chance of visiting a Zombie Disney World/theme park of some sort?

Yes... that's the big event for issue 100.

3) Carol has gone batshit crazy. Can you kill her please?

What would be the fun in that.

4) What's the long term plan for prison life? Is this going to be a permanent HQ?

Would you leave were you in their situation?

5) Can we expect Rick to gain a Chainsaw for a right hand anytime soon?

Maybe a laser gun... not a chainsaw.

Thanks Robert. One of these days, gussy up your friggin myspace page!

Zach Langlois

Oh, yeah... that thing. Uh... maybe some day. I actually hate MySpace pages with so much shit on them you can't read them... and that damn music that starts up when you look at the page... ugh.

I'll put a sunburst or a rainbow or something on mine someday. Until then it'll be super boring and super plain.

Well, kids... enjoy the Christmas Story on the following page... in January!

I'll see you back here next month for more happy go lucky FUN...

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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We're on the cusp of being on schedule for the first time in a while! Again, I apologize for the sporadic shipping schedule of 2006. So far, 2007 is looking to totally make up for it though--but enough about boring schedule stuff.

CLAYBURN MOORE sculptor extraordinaire (and sculptor of those lovely **WALKING DEAD** zombie busts) has recently completed his full-sized, full-body **RICK GRIMES** statue! I promise we'll be showing you photos **VERY VERY** soon, but for now, let me just say--**IT'S TOTALLY DAMN AWESOME!!** Granted, I would probably say that if it wasn't--I mean, we need to sell these things, and I really like Clayburn--but I **PROMISE** this statue will blow you away. It's simply amazing.

I'll have price, ordering info and release dates for you very soon--so stay tuned!

Now--enough of that--let's answer us a bit of mail.

Hey Robert.

I have been following TWD since issue 1 and have loved every step of the way. I just had to write in though, after reading the letters page to issue 32. It left me so bloody angry!

I was in shock at how people are accusing you of racism! When I read the issue in question, yes it was brutal. Yes I was shocked. But I just don't understand why people are writing in complaining the way they are.

One guy even mailed to say he was dropping the book! What the hell? First off, these are your characters. You can do whatever the hell you like to them. And of course it isn't a true story, but the world is a crap place. Domestic violence and rape happen every day. Surly surviving in the environment they are in is just as brutal? I see this book as a drama that includes the experiences of real life, just with them being set in a zombie ridden dystopia.

So, bad shit is gonna happen! It's not gonna stop just because Zombies are now the majority. And the "breaking down of a strong black woman to the lowest of the low" and "chocolate rape fantasy" comments! A woman got raped! It doesn't matter what race she is!

Sorry Robert, I just had to get my point across and let you know this is still one of the best books on the shelf.

Oh, and sorry there are so many exclamation marks, as well!!!!

Keep up the good work,
Daniel

I'm sure people are sick of reading about this at this point... and I certainly am. But I would like to just say that this book features a LOT of bad stuff happening to a LOT of people. The only way to ensure that nothing bad happens to the minority characters is to not HAVE any minority characters in the book. And that would be absurd.

I promise the next character to be raped will be a strong white male.

Hi!

I discovered Walking dead long time ago in a comics shop in France. Comics in original version are hard to find, and zombie comics are more hard to find!

Actually, there are just the 1 to 6 issues which are translated in French. Sadly, the company who was in charge to translate is out of business and I'm in obligation to buy comics from England or USA.

Do you think that one day, another company will translate the comics in French ?

I'm told DELCOURT will be taking over the French language publication of the book. I'm tickled pink--I LOVE Delcourt.

In other ways, I'm a fan of all that talking about zombies, and I think you've done the best zombie's comic I've ever read!

Keep doing good job!

Laurence

Thanks for writing--keep on the lookout for the Delcourt edition of the book.

This one is gonna be a quicky... just wanted to let you know issue 33 made my stomach churn and feel bad after reading it. That was utterly disgusting. I LOVED IT!!! Keep it up cuz I bloody love this book.

Mr Lumpstastic

It made my stomach turn, too. I'm glad you liked it.

Dear Bob,

I love your work in INVINCIBLE and of course THE WALKING DEAD. This is the first time I've ever written a letter in to a comic so, yes, you popped my cherry, buddy *blush*. Your writing is great, love your plot twists and character development, but I'm sure you've heard all this many times before, so straight to the point then... issue #29. WAIT! Don't trash my letter yet! I know you've probably had your fill of letters about that issue but I want to address a letter in issue #32 written by Sundjata Abubakari concerning the rape of Michonne. I completely understand where you're coming from. As a writer, you don't want to be constrained by people's biases and fears, you just want to write a great story that will really move people. Being an artist myself I get that, BUT as a black man I also understand Sundjata's outrage as well.

The racism that black people have had to and still have to deal with from every form of media is very overwhelming. All the points he made about the white man's constant portrayal of the black woman as an over-sexed plaything are true. Comics are especially geared towards adolescent white males fantasies. All that being said, issue #29 was great writing like every other issue before it, but it also hit on a very big nerve, perhaps the biggest nerve in the states...white dominance over people of color. The imagery and situation reinforced a very negative and painful stereotype/fantasy. If you want the honest truth Mr.Kirkman a great deal of your white readers probably whacked off to that issue. Disgusting and Disturbing, but so is a great deal of America's History with people of color.

I'm not blaming you for that Mr. Kirkman, but my goal is to try to get you to understand. Cultural understanding and sympathy seem to be blindspots for many of us, unfortunately. I'm asking that you try to step out of yourself for a moment and look at this from another angle.

And please don't think I'm saying bad things should not happen to characters because of race(there was a black man that got shoot in cold blood by a white man in a past issue after all).

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I must stop reading the Walking Dead...

Still Invincible fan,
Charles L.

Okay... okay--this has gone to an all new level. I--I'm speechless, and what I'm talking about is THIS:

"If you want the honest truth Mr. Kirkman, a great deal of your white readers probably whacked off to that issue."

If you want the honest truth?! Really?! You know this to be the case? I am blown away by this statement. Are you saying that white people, in general, or as a WHOLE ("a great deal") hate black people SO MUCH that they would be aroused by the sight of a black female being brutalized?!

WHA--?!

That's ABSURD. I'm know there is racism in the world--I know it's a horrible thing and I KNOW I will never truly experience it myself and will never truly understand what it's like to be faced with it. But I don't for a MINUTE--not for a SECOND think that racism is so common that "a great deal" of white readers masturbate to drawings of a beaten up black woman's face.

That's horrific.

I don't even know what to say... next letter.

Yo, Letter hacks,

I just read issue #32 and I can't believe it, but the book just keeps getting better. There's always a fear in the back of my head that the book will jump the shark or get boring and it just never happens. This is one of the only comics where an entire issue can be nothing but talk and still kick ass. Kirkman, you're my favourite writer in comics right now (This excludes Stan Lee), keep up the good work, man. Also, Charlie keeps getting better and better, I don't even miss Tony any more and that

is saying something; I'm most definitely picking up "Rock Bottom". Now I got some questions.

1) Glenn and Maggie obviously have sex pretty often. Are they using protection or taking any measures to make sure Maggie doesn't get pregnant or what?

They bury a potato in the prison yard in the light of the full moon every month. That pretty much takes care of things. Really--it WORKS!

2) Michonne is the most badass character in the book. I love that the Governor didn't break her spirit and that she went back for revenge; she's a great character, but how do you pronounce her name? I've been saying (mish-own-e). Is that right?

I've said it like that before, but I'm told it's actually ME-SHAWN by people who actually know things about the French language. It's a French name--and I like it... that's really all I know. If any readers have a better interpretation I'd love to hear it.

3) Was Lori such a bitch before the dead started rising or did that happen after?

Heh.

4) Any chance you could talk your boy McFarlane into producing a Walking Dead action figure set? We could get Rick with hatchet and removable hand, Michonne with katana and zombie companions, and of course, a talking Lori figure who bitches when you press her button. Please?

I'll see what I can do. Don't hold your breath just yet, though.

5) Andrew ran off like a punk bitch, if I recall. With the prison being so close to Woodbury, any chance the Governor got his ass?

Who knows--it's certainly possible.

6) Do you have one of those old school nicknames like they used to do in old Marvel books? Like "Rocksteady" Robert or "Kooky" Kirkman or somethin'? You need one, man, only then are you official.

I have yet to be issued such a nickname.

7) Is Rick gonna get a groovy chain-saw to fight off the Evil Dead?

Nope--but thanks for playing.

Alright, thanks for taking the time.

P.S. Invincible #33 was one of the single best superhero comics I ever read in my life. No shit.

P.P.S. I been reading comics since I was a kid and this is the first letter I've ever sent to one.

P.P.P.S. Sorry, but I gotta say, Ant-Man #2 was FUCKED UP. That guy is really irredeemable.

Peace,
Jamal A. Shakir

Yeah--you should all be out there buying The Irredeemable Ant-Man!

Kirkman,

I am an avid reader of TWD. I read both the story and the letters page. The letters page in issue 32 has really pointed out your clear disregard for peoples' skin color and lifestyles. Sundjata Abubakari really opened my eyes to you and your bigot/racist ways!

I really didn't think much about the beating and raping of Michonne until recently. I figured that she was a fictitious character portrayed as a strong, independent woman who survived out in the vast and very dangerous world of zombie-ville, USA. I am sure you have a very large following of African American, sword wielding, independent, strong willed, educated, football-watching women in your mass of comic book reading fans, but what about the rest of us?!?

I have gone back and re-read the entire run of TWD and I have not seen a single, white, late 20's, skinny, pale, balding, video game controller wielding, 20 sided die rolling, message board posting, action figure collecting, basement of his parents living, comic book reading, male in your books!! Not even the living dead in your books match this vast group!! I expected at least one zombie walking around with a keyboard blogging his adventures as the undead.

Then again, if they were represented in zombie form, they would have gone through the pain and suffering of being eaten alive, left for dead, gone through the pain of dying, coming back to life as the undead only to have to deal with the pain of rigormortis, with an unending hunger for human flesh only to realize that all the good humans were eaten months ago or locked nicely in that prison over the hill (if we could only figure out how to open that fence). Clearly, I realize that beating and raping of one woman is much much worse than an eternity unending hunger and pain you have subjected on the masses of all other races, sexes, and cultures that 99.9% of undead people represented in your book!

But I bet your fans only concentrate on the pain and suffering of your living characters. The ones that you took the time to give a name, feelings, a background but most importantly the ability to use a

sword to chop up the living dead and the soon to be dead that happen to be living.

Your book is an adult book. It has adult content. It should have an adult audience. Your book is set in a desperate time. People should realize that desperate times call for desperate measures. I love the pain, misery, hopelessness, violence and gore of your book. If you lost any of that, we could rename it "Archie" and I wouldn't have to check every week to see if I GET to read your book.

Don't let the haters out there change the way you write this book.

As always, keep up the good work.
Mike Gineman

Thank you for the support, I do appreciate this.

Let me just say--when I wrote the issue, I didn't realize what a hot-button subject it would be. Rape, of course, is always going to be something that pushes people's buttons, but I didn't realize the fact that Michonne is black would make it that much worse.

I sympathize with the black community, despite whatever I've said before in these letters columns. I can't imagine how difficult it must be to deal with racism on a daily basis--and have it be such a prevalent part of your life.

But I don't think it's fair to expect me to acknowledge years of mistreatment and offensive representation in entertainment--and then allow THAT to guide my stories. I just want to do a comic book about survival in terrible--harsh situations. Call it irresponsible if you want--but I just want to tell my stories. It's impossible for me to consider the historical context of EVERYTHING I do in this book and anticipate how every single reader will interpret it.

You think this book is late now? If I started over thinking things to that degree--it'd NEVER come out.

Am I just digging myself a deeper hole by printing the letters dealing with this stuff? I can't even tell any more.

Kirkman,
I want to start this out by saying I'm a huge fan of INVINCIBLE - I honestly think it's the best comic being published right now. It is superbly paced, it always features action of some sort, and its characters are archetypal without being stereotypical; it's excellent.

Now for the criticism: I have been following THE

WALKING DEAD since issue one. I was a huge fan of the Zombie genre in those days, and I loved it from the moment I picked it up. But that love has been dwindling steadily since Rick & Company reached the prison complex. I understand that the Warren Ellis-ization of comics has been going on for nearly a decade now, but c'mon Kirkman! The decompression is KILLING ME on this book. Issue thirty-two encompasses a whole *fifteen minutes* in the lives of the characters, which would be fine if it didn't equate to a month of my life spent waiting. By my count, this story arc has been going on for eight issues, from the moment the helicopter first appeared. It could have been done in three. The result is that twenty five percent of the issues contain five percent of the total storyline. To me, this is a major disappointment's from a book that seemed positively incredible after issue five.

Ryan Dolley, Detroit MI

I seriously doubt the story from 25 to 32 could be told--without cutting out important stuff, in three issues. You're certainly entitled to your opinion, but I'm just not sure that's an accurate statement. There will always be an important 30 minutes in this series--that DESERVES a whole issue--and then there will be issues that take place over a matter of weeks.

But this ISN'T a finite series that's building toward a climactic end. This series is about the journey and experiences of the characters--and when something important is happening to them--that will have immense consequences on future issues... I'm going to take my time.

And that's it for me pissing off people this month!

I'll leave you with a preview for THE PIRATES OF CONEY ISLAND which begins on the next page. This is a great series written by Rick Spears and drawn by Vasilis Lolos. Rick is the writer and co-creator of TEENAGERS FROM MARS which is an EXCELLENT book--and DEAD WEST and some other books that are quite good. This one is no different.

So enjoy the preview and I'll see you back here in a week or so for issue 36.

No--really.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Be back here very soon for issue 37. We're monthly or better from here on out--you watch!

Not a lot of time right now as this issue needs to go to the printer and this letters column is looking to be a long one--so here goes!

On to the mail!

Wow, first let me say that you are the 2nd comic book writer I have ever written to. The first being Mike Carey after the final issue of his Lucifer series. You are easily my favorite writer next to him and your series Walking Dead was the lynchpin that re-entered my mind back into the world of comic books. So thank you for all your work.

That being said,

WOW!

I just finished reading #33 of Walking Dead and I was completely floored. I knew at the end of #32 that the Governor was going to get some come uppin's, but never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined the torture he went through. I have never shouted "WHOA!" at a comic book before and this issue was simply amazing. It was just brilliant writing and Charlie Adlard is also brilliant with the way he interpreted everything you put out there. And the cliffhanger with the governor's demise was priceless. I didn't really care for him at first (besides for the obvious reasons) but now I simply can't wait to hear what has finally happened to him.

Thank you so much. Your writing has affected me like only a select few have...

Ben Beesley

Thanks for the kind words, Ben--I'm glad you enjoyed the issue.

Kirkman,

I love your comics, Walking Dead and Invincible. Issue 33 was very intense. My question is probably obvious but I must ask anyway, does Michonne suffer from multiple personalities? I could not tell if she was faking or not at the end of the issue.

Have a great day,
Joe Hampton

You want me to just give something like that away here in the letters column? All I'll say is that it certainly SEEMS that way right now--doesn't it?

Kirkman,

From the Desk of the Governor,

Memo to self- Next time a wild-eyed woman with a samurai sword shows up, DO NOT SCREW WITH HER!!!

God DAMN, that was effin' BRUTAL!!! Keep up the good work.

Shawn Michael Scott
Brandon, FL

Thanks.

Mr. Kirkman,

This was the most sickening and disgusting thing I have ever seen in a comic book. Kirkman you are sick for writing it, Adlard is sick for drawing it and let me not forget Mr. Rathburn.

Keep up the good work guys!
Raymond Singh

Are you not sick for reading it?

I want to thank you for not shying away from your depiction of the governor's torture in issue 33. I abhor violence in real life and am therefore often conflicted about reading comics that employ violence in their stories. Often violence is obscured or stylized in such a way as to make it more palatable, but your comic reminded me that I have the same concerns in seeing Batman beat up a crook as I do in this torture scene.

This issue made me reconsider my overall reading habits; I too easily ignore my apprehensions in search of entertainment. I considered giving up TWD after Michonne was raped and tortured in 28/29. The portrayal of violence was

pc4unsettling and left me concerned, but I recognized that this could be intended as a literary device, so I stayed to see your conclusion—after all, I haven't been able to anticipate where your storylines have proceeded. I was hoping for an end I found both entertaining and congruent with my ethical views (though I certainly didn't have one in mind!), but instead it appears I was simply to be made to hate the governor in order for the torture issue to provide a climax. I won't accept the use of violence as a payoff for violence.

Individuals do things I find reprehensible, and in a setting such as the world of TWD it is easy to see how people's baser instincts may more easily be expressed. I understand that these are fictional characters working within this world, but you and I are very much real and have responsibilities to ourselves and others. As such, I feel that to satisfy my personal ethics I cannot continue to support this book, even though I usually find it so engrossing and entertaining. I am headed back to my comic shop to return this issue and remove the title from my pull list. I'm not sure which titles will follow TWD off my list; I recognize that these concerns are applicable to many other works.

Thank you for considering my views. I hope they at least engender discussion; I know I have much to reassess myself.

Best wishes,
Dan Felty

Different strokes for different folks, I suppose. Violence is a part of life, a part of history--it's written into our very genetic code. You've never been angry enough to punch a wall? You're going to have a HARD time avoiding violence in the world we live in. The Walking Dead should be the LEAST of your worries.

Good luck.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

After reading Walking Dead 33, I've been debating for the past day whether to drop the series entirely. The graphic, extended portrayal of the torture suffered by the mayor, while understandable from a storytelling perspective, simply struck me as too much of a descent into torture for torture's sake. Even worse, it smacks of lazy writing; such a detailed descent into gore seems to indicate an inability to more succinctly portray the savagery of Michonne's revenge (and the further dehumanization this revenge may unleash upon her). While I can understand the need to graphically portray the horror of living in a world filled with zombies, this past story arc has moved beyond supernatural cruelty to a kind of voyeuristic torture porn, one that I don't enjoy reading. While I've ultimately decided to stick around to see what the next few issues might bring (reluctantly, I might add), if the series continues to seek stomach-turning instead of storytelling, well, I'm hope the new fans you attract are sufficient to replace the ones who've left.

Sincerely,
James Seidler

"Voyeuristic torture porn." I wonder if we can put that on the cover.

The sum of the story of The Walking Dead is far greater than one part. I find it bizarre, frankly, that a long time reader can read ONE ISSUE and start to worry the series will be that way from now on. If I did an issue that was light-hearted and had jokes in it, would you worry this was becoming a comedy book? I think issues 34, 35 and 36 have proven that the Woodbury arc, while have vast repercussions on the overall story of the series, have NOT changed the book to an unrecognizable degree.

Have a LITTLE faith.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

Hey, wasn't this issue just a liiiittle sadistic? Sure the guvnor did bad things to Michonne, but nothing like that, right?? And that was the whole issue! Hopefully this is the end of Woodbury and we can get back to the real cast, huhn? Some real drama there, but best to bury it all. As for Ant-Man, in regards to my letter (and your response) printed in TWD #33, well, Stan Lee may have created Ant-Man, yes. But as I recall he gave him several colors on the original costume: Red, some blue and, you guess it-- Black! Spider-Man is going back in black too, ya know. I'm looking forward to another Kirkman series soon, maybe at Image! Not that I know there's gonna be one, it's just, I want there to be one. Yeah. Hey maybe Michonne will stay violent and turn psycho-killer back at the prison, huh? Who was that little girl, anyway? The guvnor's daughter? How'd she break down that door in that one scene? Cause it looked like she did anyway. So, again, a down issue this time. I think for one issue a month, we deserve more dialog than this! Oh, and I think you should write Ultimate Spider-Man, too! That is if BMB ever comes up for air.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Did you say NEW SERIES?! Surely by now you've all heard about THE ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN?! It's my new creator-owned series from Image, debuting on MAY 7th--that's right--FREE COMIC BOOK DAY. That means the first issue of this cool new series is ABSOLUTELY FREE! No need to gamble on a new series and waste those hard-earned bucks. Just swing by your local retailer and grab a copy of issue 1. If you like it, come back later and buy issue 2. If you don't like it--you have no soul and should seek spiritual help.

MAY 7th!!

Mr. Kirkman,

Michonne goes HARD CORE! Yikes. I was expecting her to go Postal on the Gov', but this issue has got to be the most violence I have ever enjoyed in all my years of reading comics. "When I nailed your Prick to the board." I had to pause and let that sink in for a minute or two. I flashed back to the scene in Pulp Fiction where Butch goes back to save Marsellus from the clutches of the guys with the Gimp, only Michonne uses the

hardware she picked up. The spoon goes from the ass blaster, to the eye ball popper. My only complaint is that the sword on the floor looks to be really close to the Gov' - he shouldn't have needed to dive for it, but I can forgive.

**Yeah--cut us some slack on that one.
Thanks.**

Crazy shit like this is why I love WD. I started with issue 18, and was hooked. Had to run back to Comics Etc. in Rochester, NY and pick up all the TPB and back issues that I could score. Thank you for putting out such a compelling mag. How about a little WD Giant Sized issue in the near future? You know your man-friend Bendis did it in Powers - I don't think that the WD should be out done, do you?

I think the chances of me being outdone by BENDIS these days have dwindled down to slim and none. You're a HACK, B!! ;-)

Can't wait to see round II. You know the Gov' won't die from these flesh wounds, would he?

Thanks for writing my favorite monthly,
Andrew Cup

The current health status of the Governor remains to be seen.

Hey Kirkman--

Thanks for crossing my line.

I've been not writing a letter about Michonne for what seems a long time now. I'm pretty sure I scribbled something about high hopes for her character when the first cover with her was previewed. Kind of didn't matter what her story was, I just wanted it to start. But issue after issue, the story never really got into her point of view or spent very much time even around her. But whatever, you know? Month after month each issue was 1) always over way too fast, 2) awesome-lookin', and c) always provocative. You couldn't ask for more. Sometimes I've been frustrated (by my own unfulfilled desires), sometimes thrilled, but the letter (about Michonne and/or everything else that was/is happening in TWD and it's place and comment in our ongoing times yadda yadda) never got written.

Mostly because it didn't have to be. Because I was in good hands. I might want this or that to proceed at a different pace, wish this or that had gone differently, but that's life. Where other comics make me think, "That guy doesn't know shit about shit," when they're frustrating me -- you know, like I have such a deeper understanding about how things would REALLY go in a world where people wear costumes or whatever -- by contrast the frustrations you've presented in TWD always seemed... like the frustrations of life.

Immutable. Deaf to a plea. But also real, and better faced-up-to than imagined away -- a tactic that's never worked. I would read the frustrated letters and laugh, or rail in your defense; jackass clowns, angry that you weren't taking their psychic story notes.

Aw, man, and then you went for Michonne's

rape arc. Rape in entertainment is so tired to me. But what is zombie fiction about, if not the question of who we are, and what would all-of-us-among-us become if unfettered by law and institutionalized power? And rape by despots is a trope in zombie fiction by that very principle. Predators are certainly among us still. But I didn't like it. ...but I didn't write, either. Because I'm not going to get everything I want, much less when (vicariously) living in the zombie apocalypse. Still, it smarmed; here I feel that I've been patiently waiting to get to the Michonne storyline, and it's this. It stinks. Oh, well. Figgered, Michonne'll get her revenge and then we can move on -- hopefully to who she is and what her deal is, although right about now I'm really wondering what's going on back with the others.

But here we are at issue #33 (imagine my surprise walking into some comic shop on a Friday and seeing the cover, after having been to MY *unnamed* shop Wednesday and not seen it!) and it gets to the torture of the Governor. And it's sweet vengeance. Now Kirkman, this is where we get to you crossing my "line" and all. Looks like I finally had to write. Here I thought we were deep in my touchy territory with the rape and that I was going to be able to ride it out. But my experience reading this torture issue was a real harrower, from the anticipation when I flipped through the first few pages, thinking, "Oh, yeah! Here we go..." I loved it. And I wanted it. And I didn't want it to be short. I wanted you to take your time (and see, it's checkmate Michonne in three pages -- and SHE wants her time, too). Talk about getting what you wish for.

Thing of it is, I do believe there is a kernel of hate at the core of the human psyche. Dark times have been the context in which TWD operates since it first hit the shelves, and Regis Christ! Kirkman, has shit just been getting heavier and heavier, or what? I can only imagine that having a newborn gives you a vibrant point of reference for the things happening both inside and without the United States these last years, and their implications for the future. It's that dark core of humanity's which is ascendant right now, institutionalized, and which has led us to where we are. Now that I think of it, Romero's DAY OF THE DEAD is the story I associate with my first instance of that sort of rogue militia-crazy, intimate physical threat vibe that resonates throughout the late Governor's story arc. And DOTD was released in '85, when the fruits of what Reagan (and Thatcher) was doing (with tax cuts to the super-rich leading to the gutting of national reserves, the unfettering of corporate desires, and seeding international terror with the Central American death squads and Afghanistan and whatnot) and which have led us directly to where we are today, would just be starting to show. But only just. And only if you were paying attention. Romero's prescience is staggering.

Whoo boy am I long-winded in getting to the point. Sorry, Kirkman. Didn't mean to get my politics in your comics. Mmm... they taste great together! (sorrysorry, couldn't help myself) But it does get to my point. I feel like there's also great hope and capacity for love in humans. That part's getting its ass kicked in the bigger picture right now. All around. So I guess I'm feeling a little sensitive about the whole Mitchum Love-Hate thing is all. You know,

feeling like we're fighting to keep the humane part of humanity's proverbial head above water and there you go walking me deep into real identification with hate.

And that, in half a dozen nutshell, is why I write. To give thanks. For not being tepid or half-assed in these times of particularly tepid, half-assed entertainment. For taking me places that I don't want to go, in ways that I can't but help understand. Here's to hoping you find the forces of hope slugging away in there when you look inside your head, Kirkman.

Because that's what we need.

Some lingering thoughts on the progeny of DAY OF THE DEAD... The dove-tailing fears of the rogue milita and rape have become a constant in zombie fiction, escalating in excess long after the insight has been wrung dry (good ol' rape never gets old). This particular manifestation has come to dominate as the face of evil in the imagined future. Most recently in popular fiction, 28 DAYS LATER and Briane Keene's pedestrian CITY OF THE DEAD come to mind. Cannonized, calcsified and brittle -- even if it IS the odds-on favorite of how things might play out today. So I read Stephen King's CELL last weekend, not expecting to like it (even though I consider King to have been "back" for a number of years now); the cell phone angle is really corny in my mind. But it turns out King takes a fresh swing at what to do with that kernel of hate at the center of mankind's mind. And that cell phone angle works, and has some real cultural frisson about it. He's a Master. He knows how to give you the iconic genre stuff you want, but also throw it around in unexpected ways. And he telescopes his rules for proximity throughout in a way that I thought was fucked up (in the good way).

Oh, and have you checked out the movie DEAD CREATURES? It's British, '01, regular city girls, slowly rotting away in the underground, watching TV and eating "leftovers" from tupperware. But not cutesy at all! I think it's about the fears they were having about Mad Cow. Not the world's best film, but ripe with interesting ideas and a personal zombie favorite.

And we couldn't possibly move on without commenting on the Adlard/Rathburn team. Outstanding. It's like they keep getting... deeper. And Adlard's characterizations and performances keep notching up. Good stuff. A major part of what I'm looking forward to, issue to issue.

Wow--I see we're getting to some questions in a minute and wanted to say thanks for writing such a long damn letter! It means a lot to me to have someone spending so much of their time on something like this. It's a real testament to your love for the book and it really warms my heart.

Although, I must say, I was reading going "he hates it, no he likes it, no he hates it, no he--" boy is my head spinning. Anyway--onto your questions.

QUESTION! Do you have a take on what's caused the outbreak? I'm not asking for it, just, do YOU have any leading theories?

Honestly, I would never nail something like

this down until I had to WRITE it and I don't ever plan on writing it. There's a number of causes in my head and few scenes I have in mind to explain things--but I don't see any reason to nail things down to a definitive answer until it has to be committed to the page. And since that will never happen...

QUESTION! Do you know who any of the characters in other, untold parts of this world would be? Or do you know what other storylines you would pursue (in a world where you were writing other TWD stories)?

There are certainly other people out there in the rest of the world. We will never see ALL of them in this title, though.

QUESTION! Do the cry babies that whine about the release schedule know that they should just be giving thanks for getting that good shit every time?

Well, I'm fine with people complaining about the schedule when we fall behind--that just means they want to read the book--and that's what I WANT. But I hope they stop complaining SOON because this book is so on schedule now.

QUESTION! Will we be finding out more about Michonne soon? Ever? Will she be playing larger role in the community? (I'm assuming there's a there to go back there to... watch, the prison is in flames)

We'll learn more about Michonne as the story continues, I promise.

QUESTION! Where/how can I see this TWD Christmas episode?

I just printed it in issue 34. Hope you liked it.

QUESTION! Hahaha! People still think you bit 28 Days!

Sandra Bullock rocks.

QUESTION! At the Prison, did Michonne ever work out or practice forms and stances outside? Where the others might watch?

If she did--we didn't see it.

QUESTION! When will anyone ask Michonne to teach them some martial arts? Do you have a take on specific styles she knows? Or is she just an angry woman who stumbled across a sword?

She doesn't know any formal martial arts. She took fencing in college.

QUESTION? More kung fu!

I'll see what I can do.

QUESTION! How PSYCHED are you for Tony Moore's return to FEAR AGENT? AND their plans to trade arcs between him and Opena?

I'm psyched to see Tony drawing ANY comic. I wish they came out more frequently.

Keep up the good work, Kirkman. This is one of a tiny number of titles that I look forward to with real anticipation. So where are we going now?

thanks again,
Andrew Garcia-Price

We're going on to the next letter, you long-winded fool!

Just wanted to let you know that Michonne getting pay back on the governor was justified!!! Great story line and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Bobby W. Chamberlain

P.S. what if that guy helping them escape is a spy leading the town to the prison?

You may be onto something.

Dear Kirkman,

Holy Shat, issue 33 was amazing. I always wondered how sadistic Michonne was. It kinda makes me wonder if she's done this before. Even though it went by so fast, I had to look over every square inch of each scene numerous times to grasp it all. By far this is my favorite issue. Keep up the good work.

-Shane Marsh

Thanks.

Kirkman,

First off, thanks for writing this book. I came in around issue 16 or 17. I was bored and had down time between jobs in the field and I stopped by a record shop that sold comics. I asked the guy if there were any zombie comics and he directed me to TWD. Out of curiosity I purchased a couple of issues and read them in the parking lot. I was instantly hooked and continued to read the second one while driving, yikes! I think most people remember what they were doing while they read their first WD comic; it's like remembering where you were on 9/11.

Not QUITE the same, but go on...

Subsequently I returned to a larger comic book store (The Comic Bug, in Manhattan Beach, Ca, which to my dismay partially burned down due to a fire at the cleaners next door). Anyways, I bought the TPB's and caught up immediately and have read them every month since then. Returning to the store I have also begun to follow DMZ, Y, Invincible, Goon and a few others. I even bought TWD issue number one on ebay for about \$55.00. Will you be at Comicon in 2007? I'd like to have it signed! Anyhow, here are a few questions/grievances.

I'll be there. I'm sure I can be found at the Image booth or the Marvel booth at various times during the con.

1.) To the guys that were offended by Michonne's

rape and torture, let me remind you that Morgan is raising his son Duane. It would have been such a cliché if his mother was raising him and his father had been out of his life since he was an infant. Tyreese was democratically elected to lead the group, Rick was not, so an african-american man is now the leader of the group. Also, if you had to be stuck in zombie central, I'm sure most of us would pick to be with Tyreese or Michonne WAY before we'd pick Glenn, Dale, Axel, Carol, Lori...ok, maybe I'd pick Carol, but that's besides the point. You get my point, the two proven and battle hardened survivors are black. Whereas the weaklings, the psychos and most of the zombies are white, or grey.

Amen, brother!

2.) This question is a bit more personal. I have written short stories for many years. Since reading WD I have wanted to write my own comics, not zombie stories though. Where would I start off in getting my scripts noticed or accepted? Since I am ok financially I would be doing this for fun. I think that gives me an edge right?

It's an uphill battle no matter what. There's too much to say for me to fit it in here--there are countless essays and stuff written on the subject that can be found on the internet pretty easily.

3.) Have you seen the trailer for the new Day of the Dead? You Tube it if you haven't it's interesting, though typically Hollywoodish.

I'm still holding out hope that it could be cool. I wish Ving was playing the same character from Dawn though.

Thanks for reading this. I hope it is published and I can have some small part in the great WD.
Manny Lerma

It's published--welcome to the smallest possible part of history available.

Hey Robert,

Issue 33 sure was great, but that is not what this letter is about. First I want to thank you for your recommendations you gave me a few issues back, I sure you don't remember but I was the guy who sent you the letter about how I was boycotting Image because of the whole Todd and Neil thing over Miracleman. I have added quite a few titles to my monthly pull now, everything from Girls to Invincible to Fell. I can't believe what I was missing. Don't get me wrong, I would love Neil to finish his story, but damn, I was really missing out. Secondly, I want back and reread the whole series and I think I noticed something so I have a few questions:

1) In issue 20, is that Thomas's dead body that the other zombie gets his intestine caught on and falls?

YES IT IS! I think you're the first to notice this. Good eye.

2) If it is, how the hell did he get his glasses

back on, at the end of issue 18 when Maggie shoots him he is not wearing them.

I think it's pretty obvious that he had a back-up pair in his pocket.

3) Is our gang going to go out looking for other survivors or try to contact anyone else after what Rick, Michonne and Glenn just went thru, I mean they all can't be bad (can they) ?

I think survival is the priority now--no need to find more people until you can safely live with the people you have.

Well that's all for now, oh yeah one last thing, I have been selling cars for about 5 years now, and if this comic thing doesn't work out give me a call, Big ugly guys like you do pretty well (just kidding)

Erik Porter

Did you just call me UGLY? I know for a fact and am a quite handsome dude. Next time I get shit like that from you I'm totally not printing your letter.

Yo Robert,

Just got issue #33..... I have a few words for you...

This has to be the most sick, twisted, gross, nasty, warped, cruel piece of work you have ever done.

Keep up the good work...

Rod Paddock

Glad you liked it.

Damn but issue #33 was THE most disturbing, most brutal thing I have ever seen in a comic. I have only one thing to say to you, you sadistic bastard.

God bless you.

Coming from an agnostic that pretty good praise. As I said in my first letter, I have been with this series from issue #1 and I'm still surprised at the unique twists. I mean everybody knows Michonne is crazy, but we didn't expect batshit insane. Some will undoubtedly say it was too much however and will bitch and moan about some sort of racist undertones. I didn't see them myself but some people just HAVE to read more into things than are really there. I actually got my wife who does get several comics on her own to read this issue! This is remarkable because she won't watch any zombie movies at all, she finds the whole concept disturbing on a deep psychological level. Anyway just wanted to say I'm still here and will continue buying this series until either you give up or I'm dead. On the other hand given what I'm reading why should I let a pesky little thing like death stop me?

P.S. Congrats on the baby and enjoy these first years as much as you can. My oldest, Autumn is 10 and the twins Emily & Kaitlin are 7. Those years passed quickly! (I had to mention them, after my first letter they wanted to see their

names in print not that I'd let them read the book just yet)

Chris Lenkevich

Thanks for writing.

Man, Kirkmonster....

I knew Michonne would exact her own form of revenge if she got the chance but never in darkest side of my mind did I envision what happened in issue #33. (Okay, I actually did envision it that way but I have to pretend my mind doesn't go that dark.) Man, she really put it to the man, so to speak and all of his various man parts. Well, after what he did to her, he deserved all that and maybe more. It would be amazing if he managed to pull through just to see what kind of crap he would try to pull next. I don't see how he is going to do that though. The various infections he should get from the things Michonne did (especially the spoon) probably will kill him if he doesn't die from shock.

That's what I'm saying.

Kirkman, I know you have to be channeling the zombie universe into your brain at night while you sleep. There is no way a nice boy from Kentucky could ever come up with this stuff...

You'd be surprised.

Keep on writing. I think maybe The Walking Dead is my favorite comic mag in the universe (don't worry, Invincible is right up there with it).

I hope you keep The Walking Dead walking for years to come.

Sincerely,
Michael

That's the plan--we want to keep this thing going well past issue 300!

Robert,
Did you change the book's title from "The Walking Dead" to "Snuff Films Monthly" and not tell anyone?

Yes I did--Image fucked up the logo.

In my opinion, you crossed the line in terms of gratuitous violence with issue #33 - and that's saying a lot for a zombie book! It's too much - severing arms, pulling out eyeballs, graphic torturing! Suddenly we entered the realm of pornographic violence. You know what I'm talking about, where you're just dishing out the blood and mayhem to the delight and quasi-sexual gratification of the sicko groundlings - "Oh, look at those quivering entrails! See the spraying blood? That gets me hot!!" It's pandering, Kirkman and it's the lowest level of creativity that a writer can aspire too.

What can I say--we all have our off months. I think the issue is an important part of the tapestry of this book--but what do I know?

Wouldn't it have been more effective to have Michonne walk into the governor's room and close

the door behind her - then leave it to the reader's imagination about what her wrath drove her to do? No, you have to descend to the depths that every moronic horror film director in this generation falls to - "I have to show everything and leave nothing to the imagination!" What we're talking about here is a real dearth of imagination and an excess of blood-thirstiness - that's not a good thing, Robert. The love of excessive violence cannot be healthy, psychologically speaking, yet the media insists on drenching us in an overabundance of bile, blood and body parts and then everyone wants to know why things like Columbine happen. Yes, we all have personal responsibility in terms of our behavior, but what about YOUR responsibility? Would you really want some dumb ass emulating the torture scene you portrayed in this issue? If one is trained up in a society where savagery is presented as a justifiable solution to one's problems, some idiot WILL invariably choose it and then we all have to live with the repercussions.

It was always my plan to NOT show what happened to Michonne--to show the "closed door" as you suggest. But then when it came time for HER revenge--I wanted to show every single action taken against the Governor (aside from a few done while he was passed out).

The idea is that you never SEE the evil person's actions... but when the good person does their thing--you see just how evil they can be. It make you question the character--and hopefully yourself--especially if you're cheering them on the whole way.

There was SOME thought that went into the whole thing.

After a while, you can't get images such as these out of your brain pan. Is this what you see when you close your eyes? Must be hard to sleep at night. Thanks for contributing to my insomnia.

Sissy.

At least when you had Michonne getting raped you didn't show it in detail, I suppose we should be grateful for that!

You know, I can put up with a certain amount of blood, IF it drives a story, but you were pandering and you know it. I'm done with the book. I've been with you from the beginning, but I can't in good conscience continue if you're going to assault me with this level of unjustifiable savagery. Too bad. I enjoyed the character development a great deal. It was a pleasure picking up the book every month.

I'm sorry that you made the decisions you did.

Brian Schiavo

Well, I was totally regretting that "sissy" remark until now! Again, it's absurd to me that one issue makes you change your opinion of what the book is. Won't you feel kinda silly if this is the ONLY issue like this out of a 300 issue run and all the other ones are issues you'd like.

Foolish, man...

You know what bothers me about the Governor? It's the fact that he's really more a mayor, as he is only in charge of this one city, not an entire state. It seems he may not even know all that much about this area, since he doesn't know that there is a huge prison so close to his own city....But he is one of the best written villains in all of comics- Thanks for that. For writing such a great book every month. I just read #33, and I was surprised to see that the "Governor" survived. That is a bold and great decision, as much as I'm sure everyone expected to see him disposed of for what he did to the group, the thought of him returning one day makes me anxious to find out what else you have planned for him. I heard that Ant-Man is going to be an ongoing, that's great, I love it! I bet people ask you alot, but do you have anything in the works for Marvel Zombies?

Yeah.

Marvel Zombies Vs. Army of Darkness is a five issue thing I'm NOT writing but I'm consulting on that will be out very soon (probably around the same time as this issue).

Then Marvel Zombies: Dark Days is a prequel one-shot that will be out in MAY that is by the original team of Me, Sean Philips, June Chung and Arthur Suydam on covers.

Also in May, Black Panther and the new Fantastic Four travel to the zombie-verse in the regular Black Panther monthly series.

Then, in October or so, Me and the gang are back for Marvel Zombies 2--which is going to y'know--blow doors off!

I would love to read more of that, it would be a guaranteed big seller, and I would hate to see anyone but you writing it. One question, are there super heroes in the walking dead universe? Or would that a separate title called Image Zombies?

Thank you for all your effort on all your books, Daniel Reeves

There are no superheroes in The Walking Dead universe. This book is kinda running along as if this was happening in the real world.

And that brings our fine letters column to a close! I'll see you all back here in a few short weeks for issue 37--which will be IN STORES before the end of MARCH.

VIVA LA ON TIME COMICS!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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Welcome to issue 37--I hope you enjoyed it. We're going to be taking a short break from answering mail this issue to run an interview I recently did with Andrea Voglino for "Alias/Il manifesto". This is going to be translated up for the Italian press but I figured I'd run it here for all you English speakers to take a gander at.

Enjoy!

1) You are considered one of America's "enfant prodige" comic writers. Tell us something about your first steps into the comic field.

My first step was getting a job at a comic shop during my senior year of high school. I worked at Red Rock Collectables in Lexington, Kentucky for two years. That was the first thing I did. While there, I learned how Diamond, the comic book distributor here in the United States, got books to the store, and how that worked out, how that generated a profit, I really paid attention to how everything from a retailer point of view worked out.

The comics biz is really simple. It's creator to publisher to distributor to retailer to reader. It's pretty easy to make those five steps happen on a SMALL scale. So I eventually became a publisher. I started Funk-O-Tron, my publishing company when I was twenty, about a year after I quit working at the comic shop and two years after graduating high school.

I published comics for two years. At first as a side job and later, I quit my day job at a lighting warehouse and started publishing full time. I published Battle Pope, which I wrote (and later republished in color at Image Comics) and a few other books I didn't work on.

Eventually, Battle Pope got me noticed at Image Comics. That allowed me to start writing more, because I didn't have to worry about publishing the work. I did a SuperPatriot mini-series for Erik Larsen and that led to me doing Tech Jacket, Invincible, Capes, Brit, The Walking Dead,

Cloudfall and Reaper at Image.

After working at Image for about a year or so some people at Marvel started to notice the work I was doing on Invincible at Image. Then The Walking Dead was a big success and Marvel started offering me work. I started on an ill-fated Sleepwalker series for their Marvel Epic imprint but that was cancelled before it came out and only the first issue was released (I wrote three issues). Then I was offered a Jubilee series, which I did, and a short run on Captain America. After that Marvel offered me an exclusive contract, but allowed me to continue working on Invincible and The Walking Dead.

That more or less brings us up to date.

2) From EC's "Shock Suspense Stories" to Marvel's "Tales Of The Zombie", from Dracula to Constantine, the American comic book scene has proven to be a real gold mine for the fans of the undead. Who are your favourite scare comics authors of the past? Let's talk a bit about the ones who've mostly influenced your vision.

I hate to admit it but I haven't read a whole heck of a lot of horror comics. I've read an odd issue or two of EC's old Tales from the Crypt series but I couldn't even begin to guess the creative team on that. I started reading comics in 1990 when I was 11 or 12 years old. By that time there weren't a lot of horror comics running and really, I got most of my comics at Wal-Mart for the first few years I collected so it was mostly Marvel comics and a few DC comics... that was all I had to choose from. The closest thing to horror comics I probably read was the first Batman/Predator crossover drawn by Andy Kubert... or really, I guess Hellboy would count.

I draw most of my horror inspiration from movies, more or less. Zombie movies, vampire movies, monster movies, whatever. I've always been a big fan of George Romero, Wes Craven, John

Carpenter, Clive Barker, Peter Jackson and the pile of others I'm more than likely forgetting.

3) Rick Grimes' saga had a great impact notwithstanding the success of the asian horror phenomenon and today's lavish computer-inked books. Did you expect such a success for something so gritty and down-to-earth? How do you explain it?

Lord no, I didn't expect The Walking Dead to be anything close to the success it has become. At first I wasn't even sure it would last 12 issues. I mean, you can't exactly admit to that while you're trying to promote a book. It was certainly ballsy on my part to promote this comic as "the zombie movie that never ends" when I wasn't sure it'd last more than a year--but y'know you do what you gotta do.

I didn't know how the market would react to the book--but more than anything, I just hadn't had a good track record up to that point. Battle Pope never sold well, Tech Jacket had been cancelled at issue six, Invincible was struggling to hang on due to low orders on that book at the time and I had no reason to think The Walking Dead would be any different.

I certainly wanted to write the book forever but what I want and what happens are rarely completely in-line with each other.

And yet--the book came out and was a near instant success. By the time issue 2 was in stores I had a pretty good feeling that the book was catching on. Sell though at the stores was doing really well and our orders had already started to shoot up, so things were looking good.

But even then--I didn't know we'd reach the level we're at now. Our sales on single issues are now at more than triple what our first issue sold and our sales continue to creep up at least a little bit every month. I've got a lot to be thankful for--that's for sure. I try to repay fans who support the book by delivering the best possible stories I can every month and by promising to stick with the book for as long as possible. I don't want to be one of those creators that has a hit and moves on, leaving someone else to handle things. I'd be happy writing this book twenty years from now.

I love working on this book.

4) In the first "Walking Dead" TP intro, you hinted that you're gonna chronicle Rick Grimes adventures for the whole of his life. How can you possibly do that? Did you have a masterplan from the very beginning or you're developing things "on the go"?

Well, keep in mind, Rick could die at any time--so that would chronicle his

adventures for the whole of his life right there. I seriously doubt Rick is going to live to be 80, and at the pace this comic usually runs at that would take about 300 years to reach. We're at issue 37 now and not even nine months have passed. Rick could only have two years to live and that could take another 100 issues to show.

Also, I don't think I ever said the book would end if Rick died. It could easily continue after his death.

As far as a master plan goes--I don't have one. When I started, I had mapped the book up to about where I am now, actually. I've, of course, changed some things here and there--and I've added stuff, and along the way I've come up with dozens of other things to do with the book that will keep it going and keep in interesting for years to come. I'm constantly thinking of new and horrible things that will happen to these characters. I love them so much, but I love doing terrible things to them.

So yeah, I do pretty much write things on the go from issue to issue, but I follow a larger plot I've got mapped out for some time. I like to play things fast and loose, though. That's how life is--we never know what's going to come next. So while I do have a road map--if a side road pops up on the horizon at the last minute, I don't hesitate to go that route knowing that I can eventually get back on the main road at a later date.

I keeps things interesting for me and hopefully the readers as well.

5) How much of yourself do you put in the character of Rick? How much of your personal experiences get on the pages of the books?

Well, at least a little bit. A lot of things in the book are based on how I think I might react in the situations the characters are put in. But really, half the fun of writing the book is making the characters do things I would never do--it keeps things interesting for me.

Now, Rick and his family are from Cynthiana, Kentucky that's where the first issue takes place. He wakes up in Harrison Memorial Hospital. I'm from Cynthiana, that's where I grew up--I got stitches in Harrison Memorial Hospital. The first artist on the book, Tony Moore is from there, too. So the way the places are drawn is more or less accurate as well. There are little changes here and there because I wanted certain things to happen but for the most part it's accurate. So that's a little bit of me in the book.

Ultimately, this book is about a group of very different people struggling to live and survive together. I try to make these

people as different and unique as possible... so at the end of the day there's not much of me in these characters. I worked at a pizza place like Glenn and I was massively in debt at one point like Allen and I'd love to ride around in an RV with two young girls in my later years like Dale, but honestly... that's pretty much it.

I still have both of my hands.

6) What's the big difference in working with different artists like Tony Moore and Charlie Adlard? Are there plans to get other artists on board? Who's your "dream artist" for TWD?

My dream artist is Charlie Adlard, really. Tony drew the first six issues and the first 24 covers. Tony is an amazing artist who I've known since the 7th grade and have worked with on numerous projects. Tony brought a lot to the table for the first volume of this series and I don't think anyone can deny that he's a fantastic artist. The problem was he couldn't keep on schedule with the book, it took him almost a year to do the first six issues and the schedule was starting to catch up to us.

Tony was getting other offers on other books with looser deadlines and so it was decided that he would move on and just do covers. When it came time to replace Tony I looked at a few artists before I settled on Charlie simply because I didn't think Charlie would do it.

Just to be sure, I offered him the gig and was shocked when he accepted. I had published Charlie's work in an anthology I put out back in the Funk-O-Tron days but never in a million years did I think he'd be willing to hop on *The Walking Dead*. By this point the book was a clear success, and I was able to offer him a guaranteed page rate just based on what our sales were at the time--but I had no idea the book would continue to climb in sales and become the hit it is today--and neither did Charlie. I'd always been a huge fan of Charlie's work. I first encountered his work on Larry Young's *Astronauts in Trouble* but Charlie has been around for YEARS (seriously, he's very old. Heh.). He's done work on nearly every major character at Marvel and DC from Batman to Spider-Man to Green Lantern to, well... you get the idea. I was jumping for joy when he signed on to start the book with issue 7.

And he's so professional and reliable he finished issue 7 right away and dove into issue 8 and got us back on schedule right away.

Charlie's art is much more gritty and dark than Tony's. I think it's a much better fit for what I wanted to do and where I wanted to go with the book. It also worked out that the book got much darker and violent as Charlie came on so

it really worked well with the tone. Charlie really hit his stride early on with the book and has only gotten better and better with every issue.

So Charlie is it for me. If he ever decides to move on--I'll worry about another artist then, but for now--I'd be happy to have Charlie finish out the book with me... in a few decades or so (he's not THAT old).

7) "*The Walking Dead*" seems to take direct inspiration from the narrative clichés of all George A. Romero's flicks. Why skipping other interesting character driven zombie Movies like "*The Evil Dead*", "*Re-Animator*" or "*The Serpent and the Rainbow*?" Why did you choose to stick to the "man-eating zombies" thing?

Well, I think most zombie movies follow Romero's "rules" at least partially. There are variations in the speed of the zombies and other minor things but for the most part things pretty much run in-line with what George Romero set up aside from a few exceptions. So, I kinda thought I'd do my part in cementing the "rules" in other works about Zombies. Vampires and Werewolves have these set rules that are used to varying degrees in all works of fiction featuring them... but zombies are sometimes used in vastly different ways. So I just wanted to be another person out there following the "rules" as I think they should be.

Also, these types of zombies lend themselves better to a long-term survival story that spans a number of years. I couldn't very well go the mad-scientist or the haunted cabin route and keep things interesting for years.

8) More on that. Unlike Romero, who gave his movies a strong political and satirical subtext, you seem to have put all your effort in character development and continuity. This seems quite funny, considering your "*Battle Pope*" stint and the frequent post-September Eleven references of today's so many mainstream comics.

I like to keep things as timeless as possible. I'd hate for the issues of today to date the work. I think I've kept things fairly universal in the book. I mean, once we all have cell phones implanted in our heads it'll be hard to argue this didn't take place in the past but for now at least I don't think there's anything that dates to work too terribly much.

9) Let alone the references to all survival horror's classics, seems to me that "*The Walking Dead*" is very akin to "grown-ups" comics like "*Kings in Disguise*", "*Strangers in Paradise*", "*Blankets*", etc. Which is quite surprising, if you think about the average "Wham-Bam" approach of Image Comics. After all these are the same guys of "*Spawn*" and "*Savage Dragon*"...

Ah, but you do Image a disservice by judging them by one book. They are also the company of *Leave it to Chance*, *A Touch of Silver*, *Age of Bronze*, *Ministry of Space*, *Fell*, *Hawaiian Dick* and countless other cerebral non-superhero books. Image is a company that can publish the wham-bam action of *Savage Dragon* and *Invincible* right next to the artiness of something like *Kabuki* or humor books like *Liberty Meadows* or *PVP*. Image is a truly unique and fantastic comic book publisher and I think *The Walking Dead* is just another quality book that fits in well with their overall line-up.

But yeah, the book is about the characters. I want people to care about the characters and want to see what happens to them next--above all else, this is what's most important with the book. Right now the American comics market is in the middle (or near the end) of a horror comics boom, or more specifically a zombie comics boom. They're everywhere. I don't think there's a publisher in comics that hasn't done at least one zombie book in the last five years. And that's going to bust eventually, soon, I think. Pretty soon people are going to be sick of zombie books. And if this book was solely about "zombies" and had little else to offer--the book might be hurt by that bust--and honestly it could still be hurt. But hopefully people will see there's much more to this book than simple zombie action and gore.

To be honest--I wouldn't have any fun writing this book if it was just zombie nonsense all the time. I'm much more interested in chronicling the lives of these characters than simply figuring out ways for them to die gruesome deaths.

10) although zombies have developed a loyal following during their ventures on the silver screen, comicwise they've never experienced a success like the one they had with "The Walking Dead" or "Marvel Zombies". How do you explain that?

I'm totally awesome? All joking aside--I have no clue. *Marvel Zombies*, I think, is a success because it's something Marvel has NEVER done before. It's something that's just shocking to see Marvel allow to be published. I did things in that book I thought I was going to be fired over--but they were fine with it. And I've got to think that at least contributed to its success.

With *The Walking Dead*--I don't really know. I think it has very little in common with other Zombie comics in that we focus on the characters so much. I'd like to stick with the book to the point that there aren't many zombies left in the book. I'd love to be able to write this comic for twenty years or more--to the point where the characters (that are left) are building houses and only see a zombie once every few months--and

the book is more about reestablishing civilization than it is about continually protecting themselves.

Most other zombie comics are just short-term cash grabs, really. Just do a one-shot of five or six issues and move on. And when you do that--you really don't have the room to do anything that hasn't been done better in countless movies. Now there are, of course, exceptions to that--like *Remains* by Steve Niles and Kieron Dwyer, which I thought was great. But for the most part, I don't think other zombie books offer up anything new.

At the very least--*The Walking Dead* offers the promise of the continued adventure... sticking with the same characters for years reaching past what any zombie movie has been able to show thus far.

At the end of the day, though--I have no clue why it sells so well. Maybe my mom is buying all the copies.

11) In the last few years you've been working alongside majors like Image and Marvel nonchalantly shifting from comedy to horror, from super-heroes to "What if". In which context do you feel most at ease, and why?

I find it all equally difficult. Some days I'm in the mood to write *The Walking Dead* but *Ultimate X-Men* is due and so it's kinda hard to kick into super-hero gear but for the most part I'm able to avoid that. I like doing different types of things all the time--it keeps things fresh and keeps me from having ideas that are interchangeable between whatever I'm working on.

I'm never sitting around deciding if I should do something in *The Walking Dead* or save it for *Invincible*. Everything I work on is so different from each other it's easy to keep things separate and bounce from book to book.

So some days it's easier to do a light-hearted superhero book and some days it's easier to do a dark superhero book or a survival horror book, it really just depends on what kind of mood I'm in and luckily, I've got enough differing work to be able to work on something no matter what mood I'm in.

And that'll do it for this month. I promise to resume regular mail-answering duties next month. See you then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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I'm sure there's a ton of things I should probably be telling you about but there's a bunch of mail to answer since I ran that interview last issue instead of a letters column... so I gotta get caught up.

So let's dive in shall we?

Dear Mister Kirkman,

In issue 35, why is it the Asian guy who drives a car into a wall? Couldn't you have made the driver a white person? Why do you have to perpetuate the Asians-drive-badly stereotype? Being a proud half-Asian, I'm somewhat offended. At LEAST half offended, to be sure!

For cryin' out loud, the Hispanic guy turns out to be a liar and a traitor? I can't BELIEVE you! Why couldn't he be a just, kind-hearted and honest friend? Your choices are getting worse and worse... And not only is the strong black female character, Michonne, raped and tortured--but she's also a schizophrenic?! You add even further insult upon injury, it's no wonder all these SINCERE and INTELLIGENT readers are dropping your book like a ruptured colostomy bag!

Also, why do you have so many white characters going through hell on earth, issue after issue? Do you hate white people, too? And those poor, poor zombies... EVERY issue, these helpless, hopeless beings are RE-KILLED left and right! Like the first time wasn't BAD enough! It's as if THEY DIDN'T MATTER TO YOU. Your offensiveness KNOWS NO BOUNDS, sir! Have you no cultural understanding or sympathy?

I implore you, please, stop this madness. For the sake of the few readers you have left.

Drew G.
Berkeley, CA

PS -- Last issue was great writing, like every other issue before it. Keep up the good work, man.

Excellent letter, young Drew.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you Drew Gill, production artist at Image comics. Take a bow, Drew. Way to take something very not funny and make it very funny.

It's good to know I have at least one reader left.

Well, kids it looks like that'll do it for this issue's installment of "Letter Hacks." I really appreciate you buying this issue and I hope--what? There's more?

Damn.

ARGHHH!!!! I can't stand the suspense this comic is so good!!! Who's worried about zombies, it's your cliffhangers that are killing me!

I can't believe you: You left the Governor alive, overran the prison with zombies, didn't explain the helicopter, and set Woodbury only a few miles from the Prison? I love it! I hate waiting! What's gonna happen? 30 days is forever!!! (good job on the regular schedule!)

Well, we slipped

again this ish--but seriously, this is the last time. Also, I DID explain the helicopter. The Governor mentioned where it was from in issue 28, I believe. They all kinda run together for me.

Here is what I want to have happen. I want ever escalating tribal battles! Rick's Tribe vrs the Governor's! I want to see Woodbury overrun by zombies when the Governor tries to take the prison. I want a long drawn out 3 way battle: Prison vs Woodbury vs Zombies. Then I want Rick to emerge as the leader of all the survivors. Then! I want Rick's Tribe to find/join a HUGE tribe. They work to clear the land of zombies, and succeed, things look good, then a giant swarm of migrating zombies sweeps in, hundreds die and it is utter terror!

Basically, I'm addicted to your writing and need you to take it up a notch so I can get the same high again. I've had to start buying Invincible & Antman. I just can't stand it. Could you get Bendis to let you write Ultimate Spiderman?

He's too senile to know when it's time to move on. I'm working on it, though.

Here's to sales doubling by issue 50!
Mahdrou McCaleb

We can only hope...

Robert Kirkman,

I have been enjoying the "Walking Dead" comics for a few months now. The local comic shop owner not only knows my first name but loves me. I ran into WD on issue 32. Since I have bought everything from 1-34. The topic is great and could run mini stories for years.

The characters are very real... and sad. I mean. Donna. Clueless, bent and now dead. Rick was so... clueless and weak in the first few issues. He has managed to grow up and get some hardness to him. All just in time to become crippled with the broken hand and then having the hand chopped off. I mean "GAHH".

All in all the people are believable. I think I can "understand" each of them. Yet some of them, like the governor, just don't make sense. Unless you're going for the extreme things do crazy things to people.

Everything other than feeding strangers to the zombies, I can see and almost expect. You have to have something to really toss the readers around. What happened in the office when Rick lost his hand... I can see it going down that way. I expected Mac to act like she did and Glenn to gasp in horror, just like he did. Question, why was Glenn pretty much just locked up and left alone in the town? Mac was abused, Rick was not only cut but interrogated... Humm... did they do something to Glenn that your not ready to tell us about?

I was just worried about Asian backlash... so I kept Glenn safe and sound in the room.

There are only 2 problems I think I should address. Sometimes Mac's sword looks like a short sword, sometimes a regular length katana and sometimes it looks like a full blown Tachi (big long sword katana, weighs more). What size is it and don't tell me short sword because I really doubt that, even if wielded by a trained fighter there is no way a short blade would chop a skull in half.

It's a katana. I can only imagine what you're seeing on the pages is foreshortening... and uh... forelongening.

Mac's next door kid.. the sword collector.. more than likly had a bunch of cheap junk swords to begin with. 90% of these would have bent or broken by now. But if he had ordered one from a traditional sword maker, then yeah, perfect Mac sword. Those happen to cost around 2 grand to start. Very possible the kid bought one of those and Mac happened to pick the good one out of the bunch. (My buddy ordered a "real" katana and it is sweet)

Michonne was a lawyer, I imagine she probably lived in a pretty nice neighborhood next to a rich family with a spoiled brat who got whatever he wanted.

But man, Mac is so bad news with the blade. She did not get that from fencing class! Not even Kendo in the US teaches the sword play that she uses. Maybe she could wing it using her fencing.

I imagine it is part fencing and part living on your own killing zombies nonstop for about six months.

I'm thinking either she is some sort of agent, trained martial artist or the slim chance that she watched a few good movies and sort of figured it out along the way. No matter what, she is messed up in the head.

Indeed.

We NEED some depth into Mac's past. Maybe reveal something to us. Bring Mac "in" more. Turn her from a strange, off minded, power character that is mysterious into someone that your readers might know in real life, that became a power player because of something.

Thought I did that?

Next, Why is it that the zombies just... appear... five feet away and jump on people? If anyone is half paying attention, they will clearly see the zombies coming, in the woods or not. Shoot, in the woods you would hear their foot steps in the leaves... It makes me think that the characters are not doing their job. Like the attack in the woods when the team is going back to the prison?? Just all of a sudden they are surrounded? If the zombies move 1/2 or 1/3 speed... that is.. very unlikely. Unless no one is paying attention.

Zombies move VERY slowly, so in order for them to be close enough to attack, they were probably already practically in their path, only moving a few feet to get to them.

Would that make noise? Six zombies moving ten or fifteen feet toward a human as it walked toward them? Sure. It'd make a bit of a rustling noise, branches moving, footsteps on leaves, etc. BUT... would it make as much noise as five people hustling through the woods? No. Rick, Glenn, Michonne, Alice and Martinez would have made so much noise moving through the woods, even if they were trying to be quiet, that they would have alerted the zombies to their arrival early enough for the zombies to be coming at them from their already-pretty-close-position and it would also muffle any noise the zombies would be making on their way.

So actually, the scene works just fine.

My favorite thing... It seems to me that people like to look through a door way, then turn their backs on it to have a spill of dialog then they have the look of surprise when they get jumped from behind... People.. HA! I think Donna and the Doctor deserved to die for doing that.

They probably did.

Wow long two questions. Can we have a real power player come along? Another Mac but perhaps before the war they were a soldier/karate guy? One that will tell you straight up that my sword style is this "fill in blank" or my style is my own blend of "fill in blank". Perhaps bend them some too. Give them a thirst to kill zombies. Maybe you will have someone to keep the outside of the prison cleared. :D

There are more new characters on the way, not too soon, but eventually. Don't worry.

Oh, and the prison problem... Go to the parking lot, get a SUV, gas it up... then lure the biters outside the gates (less clean up) then play "Crazy driver" where the point is to clip a biter and then back over them like squishey speed bumps. :D Secure the area and then clean house again. Find the family. Wait for the governor! by the way. The governor still has that one riot suit. :D

Sorry for the tangent... Keep up the work and keep them coming! And if you need help, you know where I'm at! :D

Don

If I get stumped, I'll give you a call. Thanks for writing.

"Hey--you're on time, great!"

Sigh. I regret that already.

But seriously, while nine issues in 2006 is below-par for a monthly book, at least you managed to get more issues out than Frank Miller and Jim Lee. Zing!

We also manage to get more issues out than almost ANY OTHER long-running independent comic. We're doing okay.

In response to Zach's letter in issue 34, if there's one thing this book can't be accused of, it's "losing it's unpredictability". After the traumatic events Rick and Michonne went through at Woodbury, I was waiting for the inevitable tearful reunion back at the prison... Wow! Suffice to say I was stunned with this issues cliffhanger and really hope you manage to get issue 35 on the stands as soon as possible.

I think we managed that--only to have a bit of a delay between 37 and this issue.

And while I'm talking about that final sequence, can I just applaud Charlie Adlard's art. I for one get bored of the constant "He's not Tony Moore" letters that get sent in, and feel Charlie's art is perfectly suited to this book. That splash page of the zombie-infested prison was awe-inspiring, and the second spread of cut-shots of the zombies roaming the prison walls really hammered home the situation.

Charlie is amazing.

Anyway, here's to getting half-a-dozen issues out in 2007!

We're shooting for 18.

Paul Shinn

PS. Oh and thanks for including the Image Holiday Special story in the back of the book. That was a welcome surprise. Nice to know your mindful of the readers that are picking up the single issues.

I try to be as accommodating as possible. I figure that things been out for a year or so, might as well share it in the book. And y'know... anything to have an excuse to write a shorter letters column. Sigh.

Dear Mr. Kirkman and the Gang.

Holy \$%#@!!!

In my 29 years of life. I don't think anything printed has shocked me the way WD 34 did. After the intensity of the last issue, I kinda expected you to give us readers a chance to catch our breaths. But nope, you just couldn't.....You relentless bastard!!!! Thank You!!!

The 2 page spread of the prison filled with zombies....had me scooping my own brains off the floor....because my head was totally blown!!!!

Just a few statements

1. Thank You

2. Quality all ways exceeds quantity.....even if it was 4 or 5 issues in one year.....It would still be my favorite title. This is one really special book. I'd wait years for a new issue if I had to.

Thankfully you won't have to. We want to put the book out as much as possible too.

3. Have you tried out the audiobook for World War Z? It has a few great voices like Mark Hamill, Alan Alda, Henry Rollins and so forth. Worth checking out. And it's pretty cheap on iTunes.

I hear it cuts stuff from the book for length. I'd rather just read the book if I can find time.

Anyways.....awesome issue guys. Thanks for you time.

Duane Hand

Keep reading and we'll keep promising to ship issues on time only to slip a bit in the schedule time after time. EXCELSIOR!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

The Walking Dead is awesome! God, you're so good at pulling people in and never letting go!!

Anyways, what kind of collection of comics do you own, personally? And also, do you follow any current series?

A big one. I have, well, about 20 long boxes of comics at this point, maybe more. I work in my basement, half of it is a studio and the other half is a comic book storage center. I have every comic book I've ever bought. Except for Sword of Azrael #1. I sold that when it was worth a bit of money so that I could buy the first Savage Dragon TPB. It had all kinds of new pages in it that I just had to have.

Right now I read Noble Causes, Dynamo 5, Godland, Savage Dragon (if it ever comes out), Astro City, Ex Machina, Y The Last Man, Astonishing X-Men, Ultimate Spider-Man, Ultimates, Daredevil, Criminal, PVP, Fell, Casanova, Jack Staff, She Hulk, Powers, New Avengers, Mighty Avengers, Captain America, 100 Bullets, All-Star Batman and Robin, All-Star Superman, I'd read anything written, drawn or both by Walt Simonson, Geoff Darrow, Bryan Lee O'Malley, Bob Fingerman, David Finch, Dale Keown, Olivier Coipel, Mike Wieringo, Cory Walker, Craig Thompson, Lienil Francis Yu, and any number of people who I can't seem to recall right now. I'm doing this off the top of my head. There's a ton of other stuff I'm sure I read that I'm forgetting. I get a lot of TPBs as well... and there's a lot of reading I do just to bone up on Marvel stuff for reference purposes.

Okay, one final question. What kind of music gets you pumped up to write TWD?

Awesomely sincere,
Will C.

Not really. I listen to music while I write but nothing specifically to get me into the mood for writing TWD. If I did it'd be Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds or The Dirty Three. That stuff gets me all mellow and relaxed and it's got a darker edge to it. But I usually just sit down and write, mostly while listening the The Presidents Of The United States Of America (best band since the Beatles--am I right?).

Whoa!! That book was awesome! I hope that was the last we'll see of the Mayor.. in 'Live form' anyway. -But there's one thing that bugs me, if everyone is already infected and you die from zombie bites. right? Michonne bites the mayor when they're wrestling or whatever and so im just wondering wheather he'd die from it and turn cannibal dead too.

No, a zombie bite kills you because it's a rotting, germ filled corpse breaking the skin and sending all kinds of nasty junk right into your blood stream. It gets you infected with all kinds of stuff and you die from the resulting illness. Then, because everyone is "infected" with whatever the zombie plague is... once you die, you come back as a zombie. A bite from a human wouldn't kill you any more than a bite usually would.

Heh, it'd be ironic if he was put in that fighting ring. Also, the last couple of issues had me really excited, i even almost cried at the end of issue 34! I'm sure the others will be alright, right? RIGHT!? I hope Axel isn't dead. hehe. Also, im sure they can take the Prison back from the Axis Zombies. I've been jumping up and down laughing and smiling and going crazy over the story. It's awesome, though my mum thinks I've gone nuts.

I've also got a couple of questions;
1. Will you show us whatever happened in the prison? Like a flashback, it could be lame, we wouldn't want a GN version of Lost now. Oo Maybe even a totally different book, maybe you've already got it sorted and I'm just wasting your time.

There's really no need to see what happened in the prison. I'm trying to use flashbacks as sparingly as possible.

2. Carol is hot, can you give her, her own girlfriend? Maybe Alice? Whoo!

I'll see what I can do.

3. It'd be cool to see cameo's in TWD, do you think you'd ever put them in?

eg, in my comic book, i bring back he same zombie over and over again, (maybe Michonne recognises a little girl outside the prison -the same one from the mayors room) my friends think its stupid but still funny. I would tell you the title but i dont want to turn this letter into an advertisement! (Also im ametuer comic book writer)

No plans. Although there is ONE zombie who's appeared no less than three different times in the book. Look for him!

4. I notice that in most Zombie books, movies or Graphic Novels they never actually call them Zombies. They call them "monsters" or "things" but never Zombies. Do you know why that is?

Most of those movies don't take place in worlds where zombie movies don't exist. So the term zombie hasn't been appropriated for use the way it has here. The Walking Dead takes place in our world, as if this stuff had started happening in October 2003 and continued from there. Now, in the book it's still only like... June 2004 at this point (if you're keeping track), but these people would at least be aware of the existence of zombie movies. They don't really talk about it much... because that would be silly.

Also, 5. do you think you could get a character to (always) refer to them as Zombies?

There's been a few times... I don't think it's gotten to the point where the term is used exclusively. Maybe in time.

OK, so that's all I can think of right now, a bit lame, but I can't wait to see issue 35! Thanks heaps!

-Isaako

Thanks for reading!

Hey, what gives? I drool and wait for what seems like an eternity, and when issue #35 of TWD comes out...the last page is messed up...

And by messed up, I mean you reprinted the page where Tyreese apologizes to Rick. We love (or hate) the "surprise cliffhanger endings" at the end of each issue...and I was very upset to see that we were denied the "ending" of this issue.

(Especially since Tyreese was hinting that something was up since Martinez was "INSIDE for HOURS")

((By they way...did you see the way he looked at Andrea on Page # 7 ?...maybe that's what he was INSIDE...that would cause some drama))

Anyway, will you send me (us) a properly revised copy of the issue? Or will the last page be included in issue # 36? Or are we, the readers, S O.L. ???

Inquiring minds want to know....thanks.
J.D.

When issue 35 was first printed, it was messed up, and it was my fault. I downloaded the proofs and didn't look at them right away. Image contacted me the next day to see if I had looked over the proofs and thinking back, I remembered downloading them, and I USUALLY look at the right away, so I figured I must have looked at them, and I didn't REMEMBER there being a problem... so I approved the book. So then, when the book came in and was fucked up (page 21 printed twice instead of 22) I couldn't really do anything. The printer wouldn't reprint if free of charge since it wasn't their fault. So I reprinted the issue on my dime, eating the cost of an entire separate print run.

I'm still kicking myself for doing that.

But we participate in a retailer first look program, where retailers get copies of book a week early so they can show customers and adjust orders if they think they need more copies. I thought it'd be neat to let some of the BAD copies leak out in that program. It's only 1500 copies or something. I figured they'd be collectors items, or a neat variant version for people to hunt down.

But I didn't exactly announce this, so maybe it wasn't the best idea.

Anyway, the vast majority of the print run 25,000 or so are completely fine. So you should have no trouble returning that copy to a retailer and getting a good one.

If you do have trouble, email me and I'll see about getting you a replacement copy (and they goes for anyone who accidentally got a messed up copy).

Hey Robert

I am a fan of your myriad of comics walking dead my favorite "comic in general". my wife and I read Walking Dead together "only comic she reads". I decided to write after reading all the letters about racism, which is bogus, I think you could be a little more sensitive to the letters you get but when I read the infamous rape comic nothing racial came to mind. When I first saw Caesar Martinez I was excited about a hispanic being a zombie survivor "my last name being Martinez" but I didn't cry racism when you made him a bad guy in issue 35. You are a white fellow you write what you know, I see all your characters as racial neutral, unlike other writers I have read like Stephen King, where he writes about a 30+ year old black women with a southern accent in a number of his books. He will never know what it's like to be a black women of any age and him trying to write dialogue for them comes out racist. I like the way you write ethnic characters neutral as if they are white, because stereotypes don't belong in good writing. I want to read your story YOUR story, make these characters as real as possible but don't write silly accents or crazy fictional backgrounds for different ethnic characters. Everything you have done so far in this book has been great and no racism or sexism. My wife and I will continue to read your comics (she is white by the way) as long as the series runs or you become boring. Your comic is gold.

-Martinez

I don't know if I'd say I write all my characters "white" just because I don't write slang. I appreciate the comments, though.

Also appreciate you not crying foul over the whole Martinez, Hispanic thing. I almost rewrote the whole story to not kill Martinez but in the end I decided to just stick with my guns. I think if you if you read 35 again you'll see he's not exactly a bad guy. If he was telling the truth, I think Rick is almost the bad guy in that situation. Martinez was just wanting to help his people... they were just people Rick didn't trust.

Kirkman,

I am a new convert to TWD. In fact I was not a comic book reader at all until I found out about TWD.

I love how you portray Glenn in the book. He is a well rounded character.

It is a breath of fresh air to see an Asian character portrayed in a non-stereotype role. He is smart, interactive, industrious, and gets the girl.

Kent

It's letters like these that help me fight the urge for Glenn to break out into some karate whenever there's trouble. Thank God for these letters, people.

Mr. Kirkman,

Yesterday I read the most recent issue of "The Walking Dead" (#35) and wanted to write a quick note to let you know I was a little disappointed. Not in the story! That was great. I liked it very much. My mistake was continuing my reading once the story ended. The Letter's Column. Then, I became disappointed.

Normally, I will avoid the letters column of most "popular" books. The reason being; most of the letters within will fall into one of several categories:

1) Praise. These letters are fine. They let the artist know that they are not working in isolation and re-enforce their commitment to the book. In fact, these letters should be given to the artist(s) involved to spur them forward.

2) Analysis. Personally, I do not think that any intelligent, critical analysis should exist in the same pages of the publication that the analysis is being performed upon. In fact, I am not sure if an issue-by-issue analysis is even possible on an ongoing monthly. Possibly a body of work or a story arc could be subject of such a "discussion", but with the pacing of modern comics, I think the issue-by-issue analysis is limited at best and a wasted effort at worst. As an example, I offer the concept of the story pacing. In the infancy of comics, the dramatic backdrop was informed by books and short stories. Today? Maybe it's film. Your book is not

alone in the pacing style. Maybe everyone is using Final Draft to write their comics now - so the pacing is more cinematic. (at least it makes it easier to adapt to the screen later on - you clever, soon-to-be-rich guy!). The challenge is that trying to analyze the story as it unfolds is like trying to review a movie every 10 minutes. It makes no sense. The pacing of a story requires that you juggle many threads and then synthesize them in some clever way at the end (of an arc or the work). I'll wait for you to be interviewed in the Comics Journal or some other publication - thanks.

3) Speculation. Okay - maybe this is really the same as #2 above. However, this particular form of analysis seeks to "figure out" what the artist is doing. I am not very fond of this type of speculation. To me, it seems as if the letter writer is trying to either win a fictitious contest with the artist to figure out what is going to happen before it is presented - or they are trying to "steal" the story and generate their own fictional premises upon it. Let them wait until the story is told before trying to pay it homage!

4) Criticism. This is the most evil of all the letter types. Critical feedback is important to help an artist grow. However, criticism while the work is being performed is dangerous. To my mind, if someone chooses to criticize a work in progress, what they are really trying to do is shape the artist's performance to match their personal desires. It seems that your letters column has had some of this type of feedback in reference to the recent rape sequence. A rape of a human being. It seems that some folks wish to politicize and/or attribute more to the scene than it may deserve. Personally, I found it disturbing. Thank God I did. Otherwise, I would quite the monster and de-humanized (something many violent comics can help me with should I choose). The fact that this scene was disturbing and was part of a larger story about the loss of control, fear, survival, and (hiding in there) - solidarity and hope - speaks to the fact that this work isn't just some "zombie" book. The zombies are representative of something else. However, I digress into point #2 above here. Let's see you get a couple hundred issues done before we start deep analysis :) In reference to this particular sequence - it was not the colour of the skin, but the violence and violation that disturbs me - as it should. You are creating apocalyptic fiction. A genre in which the visual arts (comics and movies for example) tend to treat less than intelligently. Normally the script calls for "me...KILL....Yoooooooooooo!" not for a deep conversation on loss and coping. Could you have handled this scene differently? Yes. Did you? No. I understand and respect that you told it the way you felt it should be told. See below.

So, why am I writing? Where does this little letter "fit" in my above world? It's a new category! Encouragement. It seems as if you have taken a few "hits" lately and I wanted you to know that the book is being appreciated by this one reader. Please remain true to your artistic vision and do not allow any feedback to shape the telling of your YOUR story. I accept my role as the READER and encourage you to continue yours as the WRITER. With that agreement in place, I look forward to your story as it unfolds. There will be parts that will disturb, amuse, and inspire my faith in survival (or else I will silently stop buying the book). I will not attempt to tell you how or what to present. That is YOUR job and any attempt on my part to make you conform to my wishes seems insincere in the spirit of our Reader/Writer relationship. If worst came to worst and I was really concerned about it - I suppose I could write my own stories. Those, of course, would be perfect in every way and subject only to praise and acclaim! (haha).

So keep up the work. It can neither be said to be good or bad. It is yours to create and mine to consume as I see fit to spend my time and resources. So far - the value to me has been huge. I enjoy it.

Regards,
Frank

Thank you for writing and for the encouragement. As far as me taking a few hits in the letters column goes. It's not quite as bad as it reads. I print less than half of the mail this book receives, it gets quite a bit. So I pick and choose what to print. I could easily manipulate things and just print positive mail... then it would look like nobody had any problems with this book. But that makes for a really dull letters column and that's no good at all. So instead, I print the most interesting letters, the ones that will generate the best responses... and a lot of times--it's the negative mail that does that. So I usually print ALL the negative mail I get. So every single letter complaining about Michonne got printed, except for maybe a few, since they got a little repetitious after a while.

But if you read the letters column you'd think there was an overwhelming outcry for my head after that issue. There wasn't.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Let me kick things off with applause for your artists. Adlard and Rathburn have done an excellent job differentiating the characters through hairstyles, body types and clothing. Issue 35 in particular made everyone look distinct in almost every panel. I really appreciate that in a black and white comic book that for a while had everyone wearing the same uniform.

Well, that's a welcome change to the usual complaint.

Anyone calling what happened to Michonne a "rape fantasy" has too many suppressed fetishes to be casting aspersions at your book. It was horrible, disturbing, and unless they missed it, was avenged in a fashion more revolting than can be described in a single word. I'm a white male reader, and nothing about what happened to Michonne gave me even a fleeting sexual urge, let alone make me want to "whack off." If readers of any race think that subject material is arousing to the majority of Caucasians, they themselves have racist delusions they should deal with.

It may not help my judgment that Michonne is my favorite character in the book. You've managed to write an assertive, ass-kicking, foe-maiming female character who has never once gotten on my nerves. She's creeped me out, but that's another matter. I'm terribly interested to see what becomes of her "conversations." I almost called it her "eccentric behavior," but that describes almost everything she's done. How many characters debut using a pair of castrated zombies as ventable sled dogs?

Also, I've been pronouncing it me-SHONE in my head.

Close enough. Hell, you could be right.

Issue 35 had a real spark to it. I was struck by the great little moments you had in there. Like Rick's son figuring a zombie must have bitten his dad for his hand to be gone, with no one seeming to think that such a horrible thing was the result of human malice. Or like when Rick is alone with his wife and shushes her by placing the index finger of his one remaining hand on her lips. It's very clever stuff, but not full of itself. That's my favorite thing about your writing.

Here's my Comic Book Nerd Question: is the guy getting hit by the car on the top panel of the second page in issue 35 based on a real person? Given all the undead Charlie Adlard has to draw, I'm sure he's used at least a few real faces. This one seems a little conspicuous, though I can't put my finger on why.

As far as I know it isn't. Charlie doesn't do that very much as I recall.

Thank you for the excellent comics. You've quickly become one of my favorite writers. Period.

Cheers,
John W.

Thank you very much John Wayne... you quickly became one of my favorite letter writers... and actors.

Kirkman,

Thank you. Truly thank you, and not just for your wonderful book, but because of how you have affected people, myself included, with your stories. Notably the Woodbury arc of TWD has been the cause of some fascinating letters in your book. When I read other books letter pages it's always filled with people writing long winded paragraphs about how mad or upset they are about a costume change, or something equally inane. but your book, has people up in arms and discussing important issues such as rape, racism, and social classism These issues need to be addressed, and it is sometimes viewed as not polite to discuss these things in daily life, and so the problems and issues never get any serious thought, but you have given people an outlet, and promoted discussion and renewed passion in very real social problems. However unintentional they may be. Thank You. Thank You. Thank You. It's just good to see people really thinking and discussing things of actual importance.

Ok. now on to some nerd stuff.

1) Where can I get a subscription to the walking dead, so that I can have it show up at my house?

I believe www.mycomicshop.com offers subscription services... but I know there are a bunch out there.

Image Comics itself does not offer a subscription service.

2) What are some monthly books do you read currently?

I already went over this earlier in this very letters column.

3) Can this be published in issue 36? pretty please?

How about 38? Does that work?

Your Reader for life,
-Michael Kotlarek II

I'm going to hold you to that.

Dear Rob,

I don't know why I write you letters. You don't print them anymore.

Heh.

Walking Dead is an interesting character study at least, but--I just wish it was in color you know?! Maybe THEN I'd know who anyone was.

See, I hear this crap all the time. I swear it's not that hard if you just pay attention.

I didn't even really know till this issue's letter column what Rick's last name was: Grimes. I guess it fits, don't it?

Is that a problem? Do you have to know everyone's last name? Rick's was mentioned in issue 1, at least... I know that. I just don't think it's important for people to be running around saying their last names all the time.

For a black and white somewhat Independent comic there's not much T & A involved here, huh?

Is that a problem?

I honestly think this book will burn out after not too much longer.

You opinion is duly noted. I'll do my best to prove you wrong.

And Again I ask you, Kirk: What about God? Why don't Rick and these others pray to God and, and ask him why he let this happen? Don't you believe in God, RK?

Hershel is the only character in the book that is devout. I believe Otis was shown praying, too. Hershel's doing to all the time, whether we show it or not. Personally, I'm an atheist... and I guess that might come through a bit in this book. I'll try to throw some God talk in there. It is an important part of American life that probably could stand to be represented a bit better... it'll just need to occur naturally, keep reading true believer!

I think I only even learned how a Zombie is made this issue too: by biting. Still, it wasn't so bad, though. I didn't have to skim-read it or anything.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Zombies aren't made by biting. What book are you reading?

Hi Robert

At the ripe old age of 24 I've been reading comics for just over half my life but have never once been compelled to actually write in and voice my opinion. Well clearly that's now changed; why? I guess I'm bored of reading foolish letters sent in by intellectual gnats with the audacity to accuse you of racism! It's completely ridiculous, the whole point of The Walking Dead is that f'd up things happen to these characters on a regular basis! It's not meant to be Sesame Street. What's more, it completely made sense that Michonne was the one to get raped. Which of the other women in that prison would have had the balls to volunteer to help find the helicopter? I can't think of any, and who else of those gals possessed the necessary strength of mind and psycho/demon streak to exact the horrible and brutal maiming the governor was deservedly subjected to? None! It had to be her! It's also obvious that was all done for a reason as she she clearly didn't kill the guy and he's no doubt gonna heading straight for the prison as we speak, pissed as is humanly possible, ready to bring down the war to end all wars on Rick and the gang and entertain the heck out of all of us for the next 4 issues. But, certain

people don't notice these things; all they notice is colour, they see something nasty happen to a non white character perpetrated by a white character and accuse you of deliberate design, what they don't realize is that by being so quick to notice the racial boundaries between the two characters in this situation they are actually inadvertently highlighting their own racial issues. You're not racist at all, in fact you couldn't be further from it. You're so distinctly un-racist that when you wrote that issue I doubt you even realized it was a black character being assaulted, to you it was just a character.

Kudos to you Mr Kirkman, I'll never be dropping your book.

P.S. I'm black.

Thanks for writing, sir. It is true that the characters for the most part are just words on a computer screen to me until they're drawn. So really, as I type them, really... ALL the characters are black. Race honestly never comes into my plots. I also maintain that the coolest characters in the book have been minorities.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I'll be brief. "Walking Dead" is one of the best action/drama series I have ever read. This is coming from someone who has been reading comics for the better part of 40 years. I was wondering if you have ever approached or been approached by any of the Cable T.V. executives about turning TWD into either a live action or animated series on Cable (HBO, ect..)? I believe TWD has the type of drama you would find in a show like "Oz" or "The Sopranos". I think it has the staying power of those shows. Please look into it. Thanks much. Oh! And never stop writing TWD.

Ty Scott Evans

I agree, the book would make an excellent television show, but there's currently no plans on the horizon, sadly. But I promise, as soon as I have news to announce... you'll hear about it.

Mr. Kirkman

Several months ago I wrote in indicating that I was dropping the floppy issues and returning to the TPB editions. This due to the lateness of the monthly issues. By the way, thanks for printing that letter & better yet, explaining the situation.

Well, just as I was about to proceed with that plan, Issue #33 came out. With all the buzz around that issue, I managed to get the last copy at my local comic store. Man, you are making it very difficult to proceed with my plan. Issues #33 and #34, were just incredible. I just had to purchase them. Now, issue #35 just came out. And yes, I picked that one up as well. Not as powerful as the two previous issues, but still worth it. I guess I'll just have to drop my plans and continue to pick up the monthly issues.

HA! I WIN! (not that I mind you just buying the TPBs... as long as you're reading really).

As for issue #35, just a few things I would like to point out that seemed rather odd. I found the issue very talky. There was a lot of action going on, but, somehow the visuals seemed to be lost behind the amount of word balloons. Perhaps it was just me, and the way I read it. Second, the clean up. I thought that would have been an entire Issue right there. Follow the action as they attempt to secure the Prison again. I felt like the jump ahead was too big.

In my opinion, we'd already shown the clean up the prison twice, in Issue 13 and again in Issue 19. So I figured it'd be better to skip it.

Also, I believe in issue #34 you mentioned that you would be cutting back on the letter pages. I understand that. That thing must eat away at your time. Better to get those issues out on time than waste it answering letters. Issue #34 presented that short Walking Dead Christmas story which I had never read before. Issue #35 had something not related to Walking Dead to fill up the pages. Is it possible to get extra Walking Dead related material to fill up those pages. Pencilled pages, Character Index, script notes etc. I always loved the idea that the monthly issues were completely related to Walking Dead material.

Thanks, and keep up the great work.

AA

I like previewing other good books that I think people will enjoy. Also, doing a letters column is way faster than putting together any kind of TWD bonus material for the back. Also, there's really not a lot. I write the script and

Charlie draws the pages. Every now and then there's a cover sketch by either me or him... but there's not enough for even one page of sketches every issue. It's just not feasible. I am doing longer letters columns from time to time--like this issue.

Greetings Robert,

I'm writing in regards to the letter in issue #35 from "non racist black man" Charles L.. As a member of W.B.W.W.O.(White Boy's Who Whack Off), I must say he is 100% correct and accurate with his statement about a "great deal of white readers" whacking off to the rape of Michonne.

Lately at our W.B.W.W.O meetings(held every other Tuesdays in the local church basement) I have noticed an increase of Walking Dead #29 being used, where as previously we had used the newest issue of "Ebony Booty" or a DVD bootleg copy of Codename: The Cleaner to pleasure our whiteselves to happiness.

Let me finish by saying that even though I've been sexually active for over 15 years, your black and white comic has provided me with an experience that neither internet porn or my real life girlfriend could provide. I want to thank you for the most satisfying sex ever.

On a serious note, any chance of Tyreese getting raped? One of the members of G.W.B.W.W.O. wanted me to ask you.

Anyhow keep up the good work.

-John B.

I probably shouldn't have printed this... but what can I say. It made ME laugh.

Hello Robert,

How's it going?

I've read all of your comics up to issue #35, I'd like to start by saying that they're amazing and you're kind of my hero. I love your writing, and I plan on getting into a few of your other comics. Also, you're hilarious in your response columns I absolutely love your characters and their development. and i like to go over a few of my favourites and not so favourites.

1) Rick- is a badass, i love rick and i think he's the best. I'll admit that i was a little worried, and disappointed, when he lost his hand, both times, but it would appear that you're pulling it off. i was worried that he wouldn't be the same protagonist without his hand, will he stay the same headstrong protagonist that he is?

Only time will tell.

2) Tyreese- Close to being as badass as Rick. If he hadn't fooled around with michonne he might even be my favourite. is there a thing with him and her, like are they together?

Only time will tell.

3) Lori- Bitch. I hate her, she's done nothing but bring rick down from his potential. Is there anyway you could kill her after she has that baby, but preferably not even on panel. I don't think she even deserves an acknowledgement. Like Rick should come back one day, and be like "hey where's mom?" Carl Replies "Um... I think she got eaten..." Rick then replies "well, that sucks, wanna go outside and do something more interesting than talking about her?" Carl: "sure dad"

Only time will tell.

4) Carl-If Rick does stop being the protagonist, it shouldn't be until carl is at least a teenager, and then you should make him a killing machine...

Only time will tell.

5) Martinez- If he is telling the psychos at woodbury about the prison, kill him, if not... then i like him...

Only time will... sigh.

Also, is there anyway we'll see some zombie dogs or other animals?

Anyway, thanks for reading, and if you don't, then thanks for writing the amazing comics.

Madok

No zombie animals. Don't these characters have enough to deal with?

Dude!

I don't have a good nickname to issue you, but if that was the zombie-you getting run over by Glenn's car in issue 35 then maybe it should be RK for roadkill. Actually on third and fourth glance that reminds me more of Tony Moore. It's only right that you should get a zombie-cameo in your own book. Maybe I should have been paying better attention all along. I'm always on the lookout for celebrity-zombies.

Anyway, I'm the guy that wrote an overly fan-boy letter about 6 months back saying how it was coincidental that whats-her-name was reading Moby Dick in the prison cuz I just happened to be reading Moby Dick... I'd just like to say that 8 months later I've finally finished that book, and it was great. Although, you could take out about half the chapters and it would still be great.

I'll read it one of these days. I'm really not all that well-read. I'm ashamed.

I'm writing now because I believe your book, as a work of art, should not be censored by anyone's sensibilities but those of yourself and Charlie, and that goes for your lettercol too. I enjoy the letters column because it's a true living dialogue between yourself and your audience unlike any other artistic medium. In responding to criticism of Michonne's rape (or portrayal thereof) you said "Am I just digging myself a deeper hole by printing the letters dealing with this stuff? I can't even tell any more." I hear ya, man, but standing up to the harshest criticism for a book you believe in is about the best thing you can do. We're all along for the ride.

I hope it was at least entertaining.

With that, I'd just like to add that your single-issue tempo as well as the tempo of the arcs has always been dead-on. Shipping tempo, too... I'll wait on quality any day. From the sound of it issue 36 might show up this week or next... cheers to that!

- Brian Hans

p.s. Cliff's back covers make a strong case for clear backing boards!

They certainly do. Cliff is the man!!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I would like to start my letter by saying that you are a bad bad man.. and you're sneaky...And you're just a mean fucker. My heart sank. I jumped up and screamed out. I shouted out curses of denial. I shook my fist at the universe and screamed my NO to an uncaring sky. It was at that moment of abject horror that I realized YOU were the source of my dismay and fear and terror

and for THAT I would like to thank you.

The ending to issue #34 was the best shocker I've had in awhile. I totally didn't see it coming. By now I've picked up issue #35 and I know how that turns out, but still. I hope this book lasts forever! ...or at least as long as you are willing and interested in writing it. I've been following since issue #7 and have eagerly awaited each new chapter. You've got me by the nose Mr. Kirkman, lead on!

I would also like to note that since you seem to have ignited a zombie craze in comics again (I do credit YOU with that - What books were out there before THE WALKING DEAD?!? Hunh?!? Who paved the road Beeyatches?!?) I've picked up a few of the other books that have come out along the way and have been disappointed each time...because they just don't get it.

It is obvious that the work is being done for the buck and nothing more.

Anyway...I just want to thank you for getting it.

Thank You.
Jesse W. Campbell

Well, I guess I can say, your welcome. But seriously, thanks for reading the book. I really do put a lot into this title and I'm glad you're digging it. It's good to hear this stuff from time to time. If you want to read good zombie books that I think are on-par with The Walking Dead, check out REMAINS, that's a good one. And I think WASTELAND is really good, I hear a lot of good

stuff, I just bought the TPB but haven't been able to read it yet. (I don't believe it actually has zombies in it, though).

Yo, Kirkman

This is my first time ever writing into a comic book writer. Congratulations! Honestly, though, I couldn't be happier to have this be the first I write in to a book, seeing as how The Walking Dead is the best book on the shelves, bar none.

However, something in the letters section in issue #35 bothered me, and I'm sure you can guess what it is. Charles L. wrote in about the issue in which Michonne is raped by Phillip. To be honest, I don't agree with him at all, but I had no problem respecting his point of view on the situation, until he reached that utterly ridiculous line that you later addressed.

I just want to point out that I've printed every letter this issue that pertained to the Michonne rape. I wasn't going to print any more complaints about that issue simply because I felt the issue had passed--but I didn't have to cut any out because I wasn't sent any. Every letter that mentioned it is suddenly on my side. Maybe those other folks really DID stop reading.

Robert, I've done some crazy stuff in my time, and I love Cliff's work, but I can assure you that I have not once even contemplated "whacking off" to an issue of The Walking Dead. What Charles insinuated about an entire race of people is blatantly hypocritical. He wants us to believe that as a writer, you're racist against anyone that isn't of caucasian descent, yet essentially proclaims in the same paragraph that we whites are a bunch of degenerate, racist, sex fiends that literally get off on the sight of black people being violated in any sense of the word. Someone should explain to me how that isn't a beautiful example of the pot calling the kettle black.

Your response to Daniel's letter, in the same issue, was the exact point that needs to be remembered. A LOT of bad things happen to A LOT of people. If you readers want to play the race card, why don't you check out what's happened to caucasian people in this book? I don't see people writing in every month, freaking out about another white person being murdered, dismembered, or portrayed as a bumbling idiot. Not to mention, Michonne went absolutely medieval on Philip, and I see no complaints about that (in fact, I applauded the entire issue, and consider it one of my favorites).

Take it all in stride, Robert. You are one of the few brilliant writers left out there, and for every oversensitive person you piss off through the story you're trying to tell, you'll capture ten new readers that are blown away by the depth of emotion and storytelling that your book presents. Thanks, and please, don't change this book for anyone.

- Matt J.

And with that we bring another letters column to a close.

I'll see you back here in two weeks (for real this time) for issue 39 and then from here on out we're monthly or better.

PROMISE.

See you soon.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

So, holy crap--I can't believe we're already on issue 39. I feel like we're just getting started, too... even though this series has already outlasted a good number of creator-owned series.

I mean, I think about who there are more issues of this series out there than things like HELLBOY and PLANETARY and I'm shocked. I mean, not that I think we're even remotely on-par with those great series, but it seems like those books have been around forever... and they have. It doesn't seem right that we should have more issues out than them.

And yet you jerks still complain about the shipping schedule. (smiley face)

Honestly, I am flattered more than anything by the complaints of our shipping schedule. I take it to mean you guys really dig the books and that means a lot to me.

Hopefully this issue shipped closely behind issue 38 so you'll see that we are getting closer and closer to on-time. Regardless, we do at least come out regularly, if we don't always (or often) hit our ship dates. You gotta at least give us that.

But enough scheduling talk.

Sales numbers are still going up on the series. The book broke into the top 100 comics for the first time last month and the market is much stronger these days than it has been in years past. Meaning, it takes more to crack the top 100 than it did a few years ago. I don't often talk about numbers these days, but I just wanted to let the people who are committed for the long haul on the series to know that we're still trucking along with no end in sight.

So that's good right?

But enough numbers talk... let's answer some mail.

Dear Mr Kirkman

First off, and I know you get this a lot, but yet another zombie obsessed chick wants to tell you, you're doing a kick ass job here. WD stands up to repeat readings, my lit-crit pretensions, and years of systematic study in the ways of the zombie. My college is offering a course in graphic novels currently (which, of course, I'm taking), and just so you know I find your work compelling and quality enough that I'm actually giving my presentation on Marvel Zombies and writing a research paper about the Walking Dead. Because seriously, you rock

And I know that you didn't do it for approval and that you don't need some stranger cheering you on, but I feel compelled to do it anyway, regarding

When did I ever state I didn't do this for approval? Carry on.

In issue 32 (yes, I'm behind that much), Sundjata Abubakar wrote in to take you to task for portraying the rape of a black woman by a white man. You clearly stated that you hoped that if the reader was this upset about this rape, that he or she would also be upset about the rapes and bad things that happened to other characters, regardless of race or gender, and that you were looking at it as "what's best for the story". I just want to say: You go, Mr Kirkman! People gave Alice Walker a lot of shit about writing *The Color Purple*, too (the portrayal of black men as violent; I believe that was the problem), but when I read *The Color Purple*, it literally changed my life, as cliché as that is. I think that the rape of Michonne doesn't actually encourage race and gender inequality by showing it in such harsh, ugly, brutal, disgusting light, you make it thought provoking not titillating. The intent was very obviously to make us hate the governor, to make us wonder about how a society is formed in the midst of lawless chaos, to make us THINK about how far people are willing to go to feel safe (as in the townspeople), and what kinds of things we want to just not think about, but which we are willing to allow as long as it keeps us in Pringles and Saturday night tv. In fact, that Michonne is a black woman being raped by a white man makes this a stronger indictment of Western history, in that yes, this is exactly one way in which white male capitalist pseudo-Christian hegemony was established. Ok, maybe I'm reading more into it than you intended, but that's what I get out of it. The governor gives the people their bread and circuses, and in return they turn a blind eye to his evil.

And by the way: as a woman who has been sexually abused, I have to say that while the scene was horrifying, disgusting, and upsetting, the fact that Michonne never begs, or cowers, or submits--well, all I can say is, she's an inspiration to me. It makes me wonder what the hell she's been through before to be so strong, but regardless, her strength is amazing, and although this may be a cliché, through vicarious living, her strength gives me strength. I don't see this event as dehumanizing her, or breaking her: even though that was obviously the governor's intent in doing it. Rather, the fact that she retains her dignity, that she is HER OWN PERSON, belonging to no one else no matter what is done to her, only makes her character stronger. And honestly, I think that's what bothers the governor the most about her, he knows that no matter what he does to her, he CAN'T break her. Crack, yes, but shatter? No.

So anyway, I just wanted to thank you for standing up for writer's rights, for

portraying what you felt had to be portrayed at the time: for portraying a woman who goes through what most people think is the worst thing that can happen to a female and who comes through on the other side of it more bitter, maybe, but ultimately, unwilling to submit, unwiling to let them shatter her, and unwilling to let what some psycho does to her rule the rest of her existence. Even if she winds up breaking down a little later (which wouldn't surprise me), the fact that she can keep her shit together long enough to survive, and that she can even be humane enough (even after her experience) to cry over her actions when she takes her vengeance in the infamous issue 33, is what will stick with me.

Sarasvati

Thank you for writing in. You've provided valuable perspective on the topic at hand. I appreciate it.

p.s. -- I know this is totally off topic, but also in a letter in issue 32, you said that you usually prefer serious zombie art. However, I've gotten my greedy little paws on "Marvel Zombies" recently and laughed all the way through (esp. at the parodic treatment of Spidey and his sensitive nature', the character based humor is great here--or maybe I just took it all the wrong way.) Was there something that they allowed you to do with zombie humor here that you don't usually see in humorous zombie art? And another question, is this where you put some of the ideas you didn't feel were appropriate for WD, or were the two pretty much unrelated? Does the use of color in *Marvel Zombies* make it more open to humor than WD, in your opinion?

As a reader, I'd probably rather read *The Walking Dead* than *Marvel Zombies*. I just prefer things more serious in zombie fiction. I like *Day Of the Dead* better than *Return of the Living Dead*. I like *Return* a lot--I just prefer *Day*. As a writer, it was great fun to cut loose and just do whatever came to mind in the zombie situation without having to worry about it being realistic. So while it's not the tone I prefer to read--writing *Marvel Zombies* was a hoot and a half. Although, I don't think I used anything I wouldn't have done (if I could) in *The Walking Dead*... it was all made up just for that series.

p.s.s.: zombie honeymoon. GREAT film. If you haven't seen it, you really should. It's heart wrenching, tho.

Hmm. Never even heard of it. I'll have to look it up. Thanks

Mr Kirkman

I know that the subject matter of this email is very tired by now; I don't have too much to say though.

I was more shocked by some of the letters recently than the pages of the comic itself. I'm not going to read them again in order to quote anything specific. I already wish I had never read them.

Please don't start censoring your material. I absolutely love this book and I don't want to see it get watered down. I know you stated that this wouldn't happen, but the seed was planted in my brain. I need some reassurance or I will start second-guessing the intent of the story. This would ruin it for me.

Please don't start censoring your material

Thanks for listening
Andrew

Yeah, no worries there, Andrew. Anything I do in this book is something I want to do, pure and simple, for the sake of the story or the characters. I don't second-guess myself and I won't be changing my story for fear of backlash.

Case in point, the character Martinez. The guy from Woodbury who was murdered by Rick for attempting to report the whereabouts of the prison. He was the first Hispanic character introduced in the book (and won't be the last) and I never really took that into consideration. When I decided Rick would murder him, I realized I might get some backlash for killing my only Hispanic character. I even briefly considered changing the story--but in the end I stuck to my guns and went with the plan.

As I recall, I've gotten a few complaints but nothing major.

I know Martinez wasn't killed for being Hispanic, and I believe most every sane reader will know that's the case as well, so I'm not planning on making it a habit of playing to the small group of vocal crazy people who read far too much into this work.

Hey Mr Kirkman,

Been a long time reader of your comic and this is LITERALLY the first time I have written to a letter column (I never sent a letter overseas and I've only just got the internet - really! Check ME out!). Over the last few issues you have

been subjected to so much regarding the Michonne situation I feel compelled to write

Is this how it's going to be for the next few months? Sigh. I'm sick of this already...

I am white (actually more a hot pink) [whoa--really?] and have spent the last 29 years living in a neighbourhood that is entirely racist. Almost the whole city in fact. I have tried every day to discourage this quality in others. I was forced to leave my last job when I reported the racists in my department and watched the situation disappear before my eyes. I have no doubt this is an ugly world

My eldest daughter - my angel - recently used a racist term and I yelled till my hot pink face turned dark red and blue. She cried and said she never knew it was a bad word. I feel it is important for us as a planet to challenge ideas and promote growth through the use of them. I feel we should teach our children even the bad words. I feel we shouldn't sugar coat reality. the destruction we feel when life doesn't have that happy ending Uncle Walt promised us

So far The Walking Dead has done this brilliantly. None more so in the case of Michonne. I felt sick at the brutal imagery I hadn't even witnessed and I felt shock at the chopping of Rick's hand. Both things hit me like a sucker punch. Not once did race play a hand. Bad stuff has happened to every character and I would like to think that if the apocalypse did come and the dead walked maybe Race wouldn't play a hand too

Every artist has suffered a form of persecution for what they believed was right. Maybe this backlash against you is yours. I for one will never leave this comic. It has given me more than the cover price is worth. I feel sad for the one's that jumped off cause the best is yet to come

Just NO Zombie babies okay?

Cheers bud - Ian

No zombie babies... gotcha. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to hit Wikipedia to find out which race has hot pink skin... this I gotta know.

First off, I want to thank you for publishing my first letter in #28. It was a great honor, and your book continues to bring me great reading pleasure every month or at least it did. The book itself never disappoints, but the letters column has started to sink to a level that reflects an unfortunate truth on our society. I am speaking, of course, of the Michonne rape fiasco that has started to run rampant

Here we go again...

Some statements in this letter are controversial and may bring a rain of fire down upon me, and if you decide not to print my letter to avoid that (or at the very least just to put the issue to rest once and for all), then I do not blame you. This letter could go on forever if I delve into my sordid family history and the history of this country in general, but I will refrain from going that deep. Nevertheless I doubt I can avoid the length of an essay, but I hope that you will read it and even consider publishing it. Better the rain to fall on me than you, and I feel the need to stand up today as a human being, not just a white man, against the injustices of the world as a whole instead of focusing on just one fictitious black woman and to call this entire argument into question for what it is.

That would begin by responding to Sundjata Abubakar and Charles L.'s letters with a statement you did not offer in your own. Charles and Sundjata are racists. Charles' statement claiming that several of your white readers pleased themselves to the scene of her rape was (I have no better word to use than your own) ABSURD, and such an effort to "get you to understand" the plight of black society does not help his cause one bit. I can offer one statement that could more easily be held as truth, however. with the state of mind in this country at present, the likelihood of that happening would be much higher if Michonne were of Middle Eastern descent.

Yow--what?! That letter just took a bit of a turn. I mean, are you so pessimistic in your view of the people of this country that you think anyone would derive that form of pleasure from watching the torture of another human being? I mean, I know the world has its sickos who would--but they're few and far between. Anyway... carry on... but WOW

Yes, that was a disturbing idea, but I am more inclined to believe in the possibility of that than of the "honest truth" Charles proposed to all of us. I will happily buy an extra copy of The Walking Dead every month from this point to fill the gap he left because he didn't belong here, but then I suppose it makes me a racist to say that because I am white, doesn't it? I find it extremely odd that white people are the only ones who are called on being racist, and I am tired of being afraid of being branded as one for calling every black person's skin color references and preferences into question.

As you said, Mr. Kirkman, allowing this country's past to dictate your storylines is ridiculous, and it is even more ridiculous to cleanse the pages of this book of different skin colors. When Michonne was brutalized, her skin color never entered my mind. What I saw was a heroic and strong woman who was given what I consider the most horrible and cruel treatment that anyone in this entire book has received thus far (even her revenge on her captor, which made me cringe, did not come close). Nothing disgusts me more than what was done to her, but I saw her hold on. I saw the look in her eyes that told everyone that she was going to survive all this and make her abusers pay for their crimes. I looked at her, battered and bloody, and my heart jumped just imagining the horror of her experiences. Still, she gave me hope because she did not break.

If there is one thing that anyone needs to hear more than anything, then it is this. THIS IS WHERE WE ARE NOW. We stand in the present unwilling to brighten our future because we are too unwilling to accept what is past and move forward. Racism will never die because of people like Charles L. who will say anything, no matter how disturbing it is or how high pitched it screams out as racist propaganda to prove a point. In other words, racism will never die because white people are not the only racists in this world, even though white people seem to be the only ones being forced to accept our racism as the truth.

I could stand here and lie to you, saying that I don't have a racist bone in my body, and as much as I would love to blame society for my racism, I have to accept that it is in my soul. Nevertheless, and I make no joke about this, I am an equal opportunity racist. I am only racist toward people who are racist toward me, and although that statement may not help my credibility, I remain a person who wishes for peace and sees all of the people of the world as equals despite the fact that some of them will refuse to see me the same way even after their dying breath. I don't see anything done by any skin color that offends me more than the behavior of white people. What's more, I believe in the biology of skin and that we all look the same underneath. I believe in the science that says that the only

reason we have different skin colors is because our ancestors had different adaptations to nature to help them produce Vitamin D. In other words, we are all the same, but none of us would be here if our ancestors had not been segregated in a purely visual sense in order to survive in their environment.

I take that even further. If all the black residents of northern cities like Detroit stay where they are, and all white people like me stay to the south where we are, then in about ten generations (even without any interracial marriages), our skin colors will start to lighten or darken, respectively. I would propose that idea to all of this letter's readers because our migration and constant movement around the world may very well make race a moot point a thousand thousand years down the line. Imagine your descendants laughing and looking at history books about today in complete and utter confusion because of things like the nonsense being argued here, or is it even possible for you to imagine it?

I wasn't going to print this until I got to the part about people reading The Walking Dead a thousand thousand years from now. You really think we've got that much staying power? Thanks man!

Rick (among my personal heroes, a man whose words are guided by none other than Robert Kirkman himself) couldn't have put it better to nurse Alice when he said that people in the world are so often focused on their own problems that they pay no attention to the world around them. There are few greater truths and greater shames in the world than that, and I accuse all of you of that as I accept it upon my own shoulders. How dare you, Charles and everyone else who complained no matter who your ancestors were, for reducing Michonne to the color of her skin and using her for your own agenda! The Governor committed an atrocious and deplorable act against her, but Sundjata was wrong. The Governor did not strip her of her strength and her resolve. The witnesses to her abuse did. I mean all of us: those who identified with her, those who spoke up about it, those who truly showed their humanity - a word too often left alone or wrongly defined in arguments of race - by being affected by it in the first place. I would go so far as to call each and every one of you a coward for leaving this book just because one story disturbs you, and I offer Sundjata a long and hearty "bullshit" to his statement that no other major white female character has been dehumanized in the same way followed by a heavy dose of "lighten the hell up." He mentioned Wonder Woman, and I found it odd that he made no mention of her creator Charles Moulton, a polygamist with a bondage fetish that showed up in many dehumanizing undertones of Wonder Woman's earliest stories.

To sum up, I think it borders on mental illness for anyone who is not disturbed by EVERY EVENT IN THIS ENTIRE SERIES, and you have no way of knowing how much validity there is to your feelings about stories such as these if you do not stick around to see the end result, especially if you feel the need to put a label on every single thing you see. Extending that thought, I call the label of this book as "entertainment" into question. I think the argument Michonne's rape brought up proves this book to be an allegory, a window into which we look for guidance rather than entertainment despite its often violent and depressing contents. In this world we see before us, Rick, Michonne and all the people in it are trying just as hard to hold on to their humanity as their lives, and they are questioning what the word humanity really means in the wake of this global disaster.

The people who have complained say that Michonne was stripped of her humanity, but I still see her holding on. She has remorse for her act of revenge, and if showing that level of humanity toward a cruel and evil man who gave his own up long ago, then I guess I don't know what humanity is either. On that note, I take back what I said about Charles leaving. He does belong here with us more than he knows, and I urge him and everyone else who left to reconsider and look deep within themselves for the reason why. I truly hope that someday we can all put racism to rest, and what better place to start than right here?

Sincerely,
Aaron Conway

I'm glad you never got back to that middle-eastern thing. You almost lost me with that. Thanks for writing Aaron. In rebuttal to your stance on non-white racism, I will say that I have experienced a fair bit of racism in my day being from the south and all, but I've never really had any that I could tell, directed at me. So while I admit that other races are more than capable of racism, I don't know how much of an issue it actually is.

Kirkman,

Just a quickie to say that Glenn digging through the bodies for an engagement ring was, somehow, one of the most heart warming moments I've seen in comics in years. Well done for making what should have been weird and icky, um, not

Kelvin Green

Thanks!

OMFG,

For probably the 1st time in my life, My big ass mouth is speechless. Let me back up just abit. Mr. Bendis and yourself have in my humble opinion the only two letters pages worth reading in modern comics. So there I was.....Indulging in Issue #35 of the Walking Dead's fan correspondence. My fingers running through the lines of prose, lips mumbling with the words, Hanging on every syllable and then.... My eyes stumbledI scanned back for a look. What could my skimming eyes might have tripped over?!! Allow me to recap. A Mr. Charles L., in reference to Michonne's vicious rape, stated and I quote, "If you want the honest truth Mr. Kirkman, a great deal of your white readers probably whacked off to that issue". I'm gonna throw a bit of truth atcha Robert, truth Ross-style. The truth is I am downright humiliated to have even read the rantings of such unstable thoughts. You know what I'm talking about, that embarrassment you feel for another human being when they clearly lack the common sense to be ashamed of themselves. I feel that now. Strongly. I got two words for Charles L. Are ya ready for 'em? Here they are Therapy & Lithium, enjoy

Yeah, I probably shouldn't have printed that letter.

As for you Robert, you may not remember but we've met a couple time @ San Diego. I've said it before, here it is again, Screw the haters. You, sir are doing a fantastic job, Take a bow. So this jerk off isn't buying TWD anymore, no worries, I'm buying two copies from now on. It's worth it!

Your Fan,
Ross Port

Wow, I should thank Charles L. If every reader who read his letter starts buying two copies to make up for the one he's not buying... my sales will go up by another... thirty or so copies! Yay!

P.S. y'know something Charles L. I'm thinking you must be a racist to think up such crap, because "the honest truth" as you you like to say is, I NEVER would ve come anywhere near your conclusions if you're hateful thinking hadn't lit the path. Charles, you, sir are an ass

Well, there's that. I'd like to invite Charles L to write in again and explain myself. It's clear now that I'm not the only one who thought he was a bit off base and frankly, disturbed.

Hey,
A while back you had a back cover on an issue with a zombie that looked like it had been curb stomped. It was absolutely GOREgous. I was wondering who did it? I was an issue a little past 30 I think

All the back covers except for one have been completely done by Cliff Rathburn. Ryan Ottley, of Invincible fame, penciled one of them (and that may be the one you're talking about. He wasn't credited (because I suck) but it was signed "R Ottl" on the art.

Also, Is Rick ever going back for Duane and his old man or what?

Only time will tell.

Is Glen ever going to get his balls back from his gal?

We'll see.

Is Martinez a psycho or a double agent or is Rick just overly paranoid?

All of the above? Except for Martinez being a psycho... he was actually a fairly nice guy—aside from the whole double-crossing angle.

I think he really poured his heart out to the group back in the forrest, and i don't think he could ever betray them, but then again... Kirkman has been taking lessons from M. Night Shyamalan... What a TWIST!

Will Rick ever get a bad ass robot hand or something or will he be a weak ass cr pple forever?

We'll see.

Who is Michonne's other personality? I think it's her dead zombie boyfriend or his buddy, but then again, she's a crazy bitch!

Who said there was only one other personality?

What about Rick/Shane's love child? Will we ever know who the baby-daddy? And is anyone worried about that anymore, in the comic or in the real world? I'm not so worried about it being a zombie, since that nurse from the town said the baby had a good heart-rate and generally zombies are flat-lining. Unless they're EVOLVING!

You know what happened with the baby by now.

Speaking of that, wif they ever evolve? Smarter faster, stronger?

No plans for now.

It seems ever since they got to the prison everyone's been on a perpetual menstrual cycle. Glenn, the Asian bad ass Atlanta raider started crying, Rick was broke handed and now no handed, and he's letting his handicap make him weak. Hersel is an old man! Tyreese and Rick turned into a couple of catty girls, i'm surpsed they haven't started pulling hair! And what about Carl and Sophie, weren't they hanging out. I like the idea of society rebuilding in this new world

And Finally the Most important question of ALL! Where the HELL is Chuck Norris! There's no way that Walker-Freakin Texas--Ranger died in some silly ass apocalypse! Chuck Norris should have bitch-slapped Glenn for crying and then save them all, exept Hershal, skrew Hershal, old people don't get to live when zombies are about

Love,
TheWordSayer

I'll work on the whole Chuck Norris thing. I'm sure that'd please a lot of fans of this book.

Hrg.

Just finished TWD #36. Rick's silhouetted nub is rad. The recent debates in Letter Hacks have been great too. One guy gives up becuz TWD is not "congruent" with his "ethical views." Another accuses you of lazily writing "voyeuristic torture porn," and another flat out calls you ugly! Brian Schava accuses you of "crossing the line" and "pandering," he even goes so far as to say you drift off to sleep with thoughts of sweet sweet torture!

Jesus Christ. I don't understand being shocked enough to want to stop reading when something horrible happens in a horror comic. For that matter, I don't understand being that upset about anything fictional -- especially fiction that they all say they've enjoyed otherwise. Your response to Schlavo's e-mail, about seeing the good guy do the bad thing, was a nice insight. I hadn't thought of that when I was jacking off to the old ultra-violence as I read #33. Just kidding

No you're not.

But it seems a lot of these people who are so offended by recent (fictional) events in this here funny book are just being self righteous d-bags looking for excuses to write indignant e-mails. I say, get yr sexy torture on! It's gratuitous, it's horrifying, it's thought-provoking -- and it's total art

Rev. Potere O. Occulto III

Well, I'd like to go on record now as saying that Charlie Adlard received a script that said, and I quote "Bad things happen to Rick Glenn and Michonne" and that was it. The rest was all him... It was all Charlie, I swear! So let's start directing whatever hate mail is left to the man responsible. I just wanted Michonne to stub her toe or something.

Hi Robert !

1st - I am a French-Canadian. Though i speak english, i hope it will be readable

I'll give it a shot.

2nd - I really hope that you will publish me this time, because i have a lot to say and i'm sure lots of people will agree. What i will say will not be easy ... But i assume FULL RESPONSIBILITY of this letter

Oh, no... not AGAIN.

It's the 4th time i write to you. Most of the times i wrote was to kiss your ass to say how good you are and all TWD team. I still say (again) that i am a huge fan since the early issues (the Tony Moore era) and i have everything i asked to TWD. I still wait for a Shane Bobble Head, Michonne Sword Replica, TWD Limited Edition HC with one of Rick's Finger (only five available !). That comics bringed me back to the Comic world. Especialy the Zombie ones

You are Great - Good - Beautiful - Smells Good - Funny - and Bia Bia Bia

OK !!! Enough Shit !!!

The reason i am writing this time, is to say how disgusting are those persons that yell about all the things that hurts 'em in this book. There is only one thing to say about that. Get Over It ! ... Why ? Because

IT'S JUST A FUCKING COMIC BOOK !!!

Do you get it ???

Michonne being raped. Michonne torturing the Governor ... Tyreese cheating on Carol. All the dead

IT'S JUST A FUCKING COMIC BOOK !!!

I am seriously worried about what's going on in the world these days ... And TWD is FAR from being part of my fears. And that's because everything is a matter of different point of views. Where some sees it as a racist act (the whole Michonne thing being raped by a white man, etc ...) i see it as character devloping, story

IT'S JUST A FUCKING COMIC BOOK !!!

If you think it was sadistic what she done ... Watch any REAL horror movies and you will see what it is. Anyone who saw Romero's Dead Series, Cannibal Holocaust, Fuci's movies, Hostel or any other type of movies that are NOT kind of Modern Hollywood Teenage Serial Killers (Scream, Last Summer, Etc ...) will know what i am talking about. Those are MOVIES !!! And this

IT'S JUST A FUCKING COMIC BOOK !!!

Now, sorry but i will hit it hard now ... If you keep reading this letter ...I warned you.

What is worst ? Michonne payback the way we would all do if someone does that to us ? The "Supposed Racial" crime Kirkman is accused of because the character (who is randomly a black woman) is being raped by a Evil (White) Character ? The gore portrayed to match the horror of a HORRIBLE but FICTIONAL story ?

If you think it's the worst and left the comic book for that

WHY WHERE YOU STILL THERE AFTER THE MURDER OF TWO LITTLE GIRLS BY THOMAS ??? WHY ??? IT DIDN'T AFFECTED YOU ???

What is worst ??? Racial Never-Ending War-Since Dawn-Of-Time ? Or the chop off the head of two little girls ? If the image of two severed INNOCENT little girls didn't offend you to the point of leaving the book. But the payback of an evil character that everyone hate, haunted your life did it ... That make you a FUCKING SICK UN-MORAL-SELFISH-SHT HEAD !!! But you know what ? It doesn't matters !!! Because

IT'S JUST A FUCKING COMIC BOOK!!!

Take it for what it is ! It's NOT to trivialize the social issues here ... It's just that anyone can see what they want where they want ! You can brag about how affected morally you were by some images or story lines, but some other don't care because they KNOW that

IT'S JUST A FUCKING COMIC BOOK !!!

One last advise if other ones planned to leave this book ... Don't read the Smurfs ! It can shock you to see that Smurfette is a metaphor to Gangbang fantasies (one smurfette, more than a hundred smurfs ... WoW !!!) ... Come on ! Call the Woman-Rights-Protection or something like that ... It will make you sleep well because you've bashed on a comic book. Like TWD, the Smurfs should be rated and tagged as Mature Subject Readers Only !!!

We won't change the world with this book. If some people are leaving, ok, but other ones (like me), LOVES IT !!! And more are coming in

Sorry for the long letter, but it really hit a sensitive part in me ... Robert, it's honourable for you to publish those type of letters and point of views. Everyone knows you (Image & TWD team) have the courage to do so. Now i think it's time to get over this. It really shed a depressive and sad shadow on this book. It really deflected the reason for the letter column to exist : writting constructively about the issues of a fantastic comic book. Because don't be wrong

It's just a comic book.

P.S. ... I hope my english writing wasn't too bad ... Keep on the good work !!!

Eric Layette

Heh... French-Canadian.

Man, I love you guys.

As an avid zombie fan, this has got to be one of the best books I've ever read. I've seen just about every zombie movie, played every zombie themed videogame, and read every zombie book/comicbook out there. TWD, however, is the most engaging and intense book I've ever laid eyes on

I think all of the pansy naysayers that have shown up in your letters column are missing the point of the story entirely. It's obvious (and you've pretty much said this in numerous interviews and responses) that you're going for an uber-realistic bent in your zombie world. Your story is more about the characters and how they're able to survive not just physically but mentally and emotionally in an overwhelmingly hopeless situation. I applaud, rather than condemn, your efforts to portray your characters in a very concrete, realistic way

Your naysayers have been infected with the typical Hollywood poison. They

expect fair treatment, story resolutions, heroism and nobility, the list goes on I suppose they really would like for you to write a scene where the cause of the infection is found and they go storming into the epicenter to wipe out the zombie blight "once and for all" They will not find those things here Sure, I think every character has his/her moments of untold courage and what not, but only within the limits of reality. IN REAL LIFE, if there were a zombie invasion going on, what's left of humanity would very much slip into a more instinctive, primordial and reactive mode. Women (and men) would get raped they would steal, they would hurt and torture people, brave folks would run for the hills and hide, and good people would resort to murder. It's a sad fact to accept, but the readers who complain about this story need to get over it if they're going to keep reading it. There will be no Hollywood endings here. Only real life. Heck, you might decide to off Rick at some point. I'm sure a lot of your readers will cry bloody murder If they do, they don't get it. I'll just grin knowingly and keep reading!

Crap--I suppose I should scrap that whole and I had in mind where Rick covers himself in guns and storms the white house--killing all the zombies and saving the world, before blasting off with a jet pack and making love to Lori on the moon. Oh, well... we're back to no planned ending again.

I suppose you'll get some negative feedback for what happened to Martinez, too You'll probably get called a racist, Funny. When Michonne got raped, I just saw a woman getting raped (and I am a woman. For the record, I wasn't offended Women get raped. It's reality I've dealt with it). Not a BLACK woman. When Rick killed Martinez, I just saw a man getting hit by a truck and then getting strangled Not a Hispanic man getting hit by a truck and getting strangled. Anyone who's going to complain is missing the point entirely.

The point of this rant? Just keep doing what you're doing. You're definitely not a sell out writer and I admire you for sticking to your creative opinions. There's no place too dark and depraved that you'll lead me as a reader where I won't follow. As a zombie veteran, this is the best zombie world I've ever visited because it's the one that would most likely be born from a walking dead invasion.

I don't expect this letter to get printed, but I do hope you get to read it. Thanks for an awesome story. Also looking forward to more Marvel Zombies!!!!

Sincerely yours,

S. Tannenbaum-Gregan

Thanks for the letter, S. I appreciate the kind words.

Wow Kirkmonster

Issue 36 just blew me away. Every time I open up a copy of TWD, it's like the story does write itself. I hope your fertile brain stays fertile for a long time.

Thanks for printing my letter. I'm 54 years old and I think that is actually the first letter I ever had printed in a letters column. Of course, I had to buy copies of issue 36 for all my friends and family so in retrospect it is a clever marketing move on your part, eh?

The only thing I regret is them making me prove it was my letter by showing them the original on my computer. Ha, ha

Anyway, keep on writing. You are an inspiration. I still think you are channeling the zombie universe even though you may not realize it. That doesn't make you any less of an amazing writer. I aspire to create an online comic some day and I can't imagine doing seven or eight series at a time like you do. It boggles my mind to come up with characters and plot developments for one comic idea.

It ain't easy. You don't know how many times I've written Invincible flying in to save Rick and crew and had to delete multiple pages of a script and start over. It's a pain in the ass. Freedom Ring in Marvel Team-Up? That was originally just Invincible and I had to change it at the last minute.

Like you, I have several characters from comics I drew for myself as a kid. I just wish I would have had the presence of mind and determination to do something with them years ago.

You are an amazing guy. Keep on writing. I hope they come out with some action figures for Invincible and TWD. My wife is already going nuts from the collection I have currently from over the years.

Take care
Michael

I tell you what, Michael... I'll be sure not to make any toys for Invincible or The Walking Dead in the near future. I wouldn't want to get your wife angry at you.

Mr. Kirkman

O.K., first let me give the obvious kudos on a great mag and please keep it going for many years to come!

Now to business and the main reason I'm writing you (first time). I just finished reading issue 36 and I typically enjoy reading your "letter jacks" that write in until recently.

Heh,

I'm perplexed at the level of complete idiocy in our world! The grief that you have received about a "fictionous" character and how they were treated in a comic book is absolutely insane! The whole premise of a zombie apocalypse is extremely violent and gore infused by nature. DUH!?? Why would these idiots buy a book (which by the way is their own choice) that might offend their sensitive little hearts? Can they be serious? My suggestion to all readers that are offended by this book and it's subject matter? Stick to your old copies of "Little Lulu" and "Archie" This is a big persons comic and isn't for everyone, but I love it! The same way I love when Romero filmed a zombie taking a chunk out of someone's neck. It's horror fantasy lighten up, Francis!

I'm with you, pal. Hopefully we've seen the end of those kind of letters for a while.

So, please Kirkman, don't water anything down. In fact, open up the flood gates and let the rivers run red! That is what made your story so cool!

Troy O'Neil

P.S. I heard that you stopped in to my local comic book shop (PACKRAT Comics Milard, OH.) Do you work with someone in the area, and if so, maybe a signing at the store some day?

Hm, I believe you've been deceived. Unless I've lost a chunk of my memory I've never set foot into Milard, Ohio or the Packrat Comics there. I'm only a state away--but I'm never been there. Sorry.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

This issue was a lot more to my liking. You think Martinez will be a zombie now? Or do you have to get 'bitten' while you're alive? I'd still like for you to have characters call each other by name a lot more, I've been reading at least a year and, well, I couldn't even tell you Rick's wife's name. Is it Sarah? And you must admit, lot of characters to keep track of and it is black and white. I'm pretty(as in fairly) excited about The Astounding Wolf Man! I'll probably have read the first issue by the time you can answer this question but, what makes him unique? He can't just be a werewolf, now can he?

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

You're a weird dude, Andrew. The Astounding Wolf-Man is plenty unique, you'll see.

As for people calling people by name, I think most people are called by name at least once in every issue they appear, but I'm sure that sometimes someone slips by without a mention. The problem is, it's not natural for someone to call someone they know by name frequently. "Hi, Rick, how are you today?" "Fine, Lori, I'm doing great." "Carl, can you go grab some bullets for me." "Sure, Dad will do." "Thanks, Carl." If everyone did that--it's get old really quick. But if you pay attention--I think it's pretty easy to learn everyone's names.

Kirkman,

Hey man, I just wanted to drop you a quick e-mail in support of your Walking Dead title. After reading the letters from the last couple issues I didn't want you to think that most (or very many at least) of the book's readers felt the same way in regards to the book's intensity. Don't change a thing.

You have to ask yourself, if these people have a problem with violence & the dark side of human nature, what are they doing reading a book about the zombie holocaust & the end of human civilization in the first place?

Keep up the good work. I can't wait for the upcoming Marvel Zombie books.

Have you given up on the game Urban Dead?

C

Man, I need to print more negative mail. The positive feedback is amazing. Never played Urban Dead... should I?

Letter Hacks,

Oh, Martinez's motivations for leading others to the prison is not evil, but Rick's fears for his group's safety is also understandable which he carries out in an efficient manner. Another gray moral area that perfectly fits your decision to do the book in black, white, and gray.

See--it's artistic to be in black and white!

On page 16, panel 4 Charlie nails the numbness and shock on Rick's face. The page is a beautiful sequence, and Rick's eyes show the anger, horror, and burden of his actions.

Charlie is awesome.

I see a war between the Woodbury folks and the prison folk on the horizon. I can't wait.

This is an adult book. What don't people understand about that? If you go to an "R" rated movie, are you surprised that it has violence, adult themes, sexuality, gore, drug use or nudity? If you are offended by "R" rated movies, then DON'T watch. I repeat: this is an adult book. Michonne's rape is/was disturbing. It should be. The Governor's death (?) and torture is/was disturbing. Yes, it should be. The Walking Dead world is harsh and unforgiving. I think Kirkman's writing decisions doesn't pull back from that fact, and he shouldn't. All or many superhero comics have people bludgeoning each other into oblivion (yes, they eventually get brought back). Is this okay? People who take issue with the violence in this book are blind to the violence that permeates superhero comics. Remember Bugs Bunny? He was smashing heads with a mallet, dropping huge objects onto Elmer Fudd. Did you boycott those cartoons?

They do today... some of them at least. It really is a fucked up world we live in. My friends kid is on a soccer league where they don't keep score. They literally get two teams out there to play a game but they try not to let the kids know who's winning and they don't have a score board. They do this so no kid goes home feeling that bitter sting of defeat. Which, y'know, kinda drives out that whole competitive nature out of kids and ridas them of a will to succeed. Ugh. You think people are pussies now? Give it another ten years for these coddled freaks to join the workforce.

People, please take your panties that have bunched up out your ass. Now would be preferable.

Kirkman and Company, onward and forward with your story. A most excellent story, indeed.

Until Rick gets a chainsaw for a hand, Make Mine Captain Kirkman
Sophia UK

No chainsaw hand

Mr Kirkman,

I loved issue 36, but not for the reasons you may think. The murder of Martinez, and yes it was a murder, was shocking. Rick left the prison with one thing in mind, stop Martinez by any means necessary. Those means turned out to be hitting Martinez from behind, a cowardly act, then choking the life out of the defenseless man. Then Rick rationalizes that it was to protect his family and the others at the prison, but his explanation to his wife does not fit the scene that unfolded earlier. Rick was angry with only one thing on his mind: Charge in first and then ask questions. No attempt was made at reasoning or capture. Nothing he said or did can really excuse the fact he murdered a man.

I found the whole thing compelling to watch. The before, during and after. I don't agree with Rick murdering Martinez, or his rationalization for it, making it hard for me to like the character. He seems to be the character that has fallen the most after Michonne.

I may not like the 'hero' of the Walking Dead, but I do want to see what he does next

Luke Sims
Melbourne, Australia

Rick is living through hell, please don't lose sight of that. He's going to do things from time to time that seem a bit questionable to us, here in our safe world, but I think if you position yourself in his frame of mind--while his actions aren't honorable they can seem a bit more reasonable when cast in a certain skewed perspective that would come from living around so much death.

When you've killed so many human looking things and shot friends so they wouldn't become those things... taking a human life would eventually become a very easy thing given the right circumstances.

Rick's come a long way.

Kirkman you sick SoB what have you done? I read Invincible and I grew up on old horror comics from the 60's and 70's, I've never found any current age horror comics that compared to them, until a friend let me borrow The Walking Dead trade vol. 1. After reading it I was hooked. I read vol.1 through 5 in a matter of 3 days and then waited a month for my friend to finish getting #31 to #36 (WD sells out almost every week around here, so its hard to find issues sometimes. so I'm getting the first six trades). The characters are well written and make you care about them (I almost cried when Rick lost his hand and thought Glenn talked

After what happened in vol. 5, I thought what will Kirkman do to top this? Then I read #33. Torture of the Governor was brutal and gruesome, and made me think do I want to read a comic like this? DAMN STRAIGHT I DO! I read every page twice. I've added WD to my pull list. To all those people bitching about your book, the kid comics are in another section, you might want to try them my 5 year old says their great. Please don't water down the book to please them, I love it the way it is. Anyone that started reading a zombie comic thinking it wouldn't get weird or twisted has never seen a zombie movie. I don't know if you'll print this but I wanted you to know that as long as the book is good, you have someone with you for the long haul to issue 300. Two questions: Will the Christmas Special be in trade 6? And Will we see more about those two later? Keep up the great work.

Mike

Hm... I don't know when the Christmas story would see print in a TPB. It takes place around the same time as issue 7, so it should have been in the volume 2 TPB... but y'know, it wasn't drawn then. I may never print it in TPB. Sorry.

Hey Kirkman-

Read #36. Classic, classic issue

QUESTION: Now that Lori is in month 9, does she pee when she sneezes?

Cheers,
Andrew Garcia Price

I don't know that that's all that common among pregnant women...

Hello

First let me say that I am a huge fan so much so that I buy both single issue and trade as they come out and want to get the hardcover soon, and love where the comic are going, somehow you have captured, depression, joy, love, hate, humiliation and just the horror of human nature. I was shocked at #36 letter hacks and people hate for #33 I mean maybe because here in Canada we have tv that has people that swear and, nudes on normal cable tv, people in the u.s and other places just aren't used to violence, I found NOTHING wrong with the comic, in fact I think its great that you show the real nature of people without law or rule, what do people think will happen in a situation like that, rapist don't become cured because of zombie outbreak, killers will kill. and well crime goes on, this is why people freak out on planes when there is a plane emergency they are kept out of the truth and can't handle when the real stuff happens

The comic isn't even that bad it could be a lot worse and for those fellow fans that want to know how, well for one the story could have arced really bad, since a prisoner could have been a bad rapist, or something, and that could freak a lot of people out, but hey just to show how bad something could get in a situation like that

Now on to the good parts, the comic has captured how good people do what they do to protect the ones they love, and when you have to look after yourself and others this comic shows just how far a person can go.

The comic has a mix of happy and sad depression and bliss, for one I'm glad that people still want to get married in the story or to lighten the mood they focus on the kids and the fact that even though they know what's going on they don't, I mean classic scene is when he asks if she is still his girlfriend over something so stupid we wouldn't even think about

So anyway you guys are doing a great job keep it up

Thanks!

Now onto my questions

1. Are we going to find out who the father of the baby is?

The matter is pretty much settled at this point. It's really not an issue.

2. Any major twists coming up

Always.

3. I know that things might end, and the comic series can't last forever but I wanted to know if it ends will you continue the world with a new story with new people, and bring old friends back into the new one

There are no plans for this book to end any time even remotely soon. So there's no reason to even talk about a spin-off series.

4. Or more pages in black and white, but will there ever be colour, nothing wrong with it the way it is but wanted to ask?

No. Never. Not until I'm washed up and doing anything I can to make a buck--then I might. I mean, let's be honest here. I've got a kid to worry about.

anyway thats it, wanted to let you guys know that you have fans up here in Canada "A"

p.s. anyone else notice that taking a ring from a corpse is really really gross, hope she boils it first hahaha

Marlon

I'm sure Glenn washed it off before giving it to her.

Hey Robert,

Geez, this whole series just keeps getting better, huh? Well, I figure since everyone's throwing their two cents about how shocking and perverse the Woodbury arc is, here's mine.....

Oh, please... more of this, please!

Quit your fucking belly aching.

Yes! This is the best letters column ever... sigh.

I am so , so sick of reading letters proclaiming Kirkman as a racist, misogynist blah blah fucking blah. It's such utter, utter bullshit, and anyone who has a least two functioning brain cells and took the time to read the series as a whole would soon shut the fuck up

I mean, I suppose I could just stop printing the repetitive letters... but I've got pages to fill here.

This whole load reminds me of when I was reading Preacher and Starr (one of the main villains of the series, for those that haven't read it) was unceremoniously bugged in an a key way by a giant, scary English man Starr, after his ordeal..... found himself quite fond of buggery (never one of those sentences you ever think you'll write, is it? ,anyway) So, a flurry of letters, saying Garth Ennis was advocating rape, saying that homosexuals were only Homosexua because of someone forcing them, blah blah, fucking blah

Same shit here

Rape is wrong. No one disputes that

But the Governor is a BAD guy. Bad Guy's do Bad things. This is an adult comic there are going to be disturbing, horrible situations that arise. The Bad guys are going to do horrible, shitty things. Was the murder of Hershel's two children any less shocking? Or is child murder somehow less terrible or horrifying than rape?

I think what pisses me off the most is that it was insinuated that and I'm paraphrasing here "a lot of white readers probably whacked off to that scene"

Fuck you. seriously

As a white guy, the idea of any woman being subjected to that sort of humiliation and degradation is fucking sickening. I guess what your saying is if it was a white girl that the governor tortured and raped it would've all been okay, huh? Rape is rape. It's wrong, regardless of whether the woman is white, black, Martian, whatever.

Me, I don't know anyone who'd jerk off to the thought of that. Anyone well adjusted, anyway. guess we run in different circles

Yeah. Racism is fucked. But I see it from all sides. So a nickel's worth of free advice: see people, not colour. black, white, red, yellow.....we all bleed, shit and die the same. Bet you kiss the woman you love good night the same way I do. We're all on the same planet, after all..

But there was one good point. Michonne is a good, strong black character. So is Tyresse. And Morgan.

How you can read the Walking Dead since issue one and then accuse Kirkman of being even remotely racist is fuckin' beyond me

The Governor's a red neck asshole, sure, but is he representative of all white folks?

Well, I DO hate white people. That's a fact.

Once again. He's a BAD GUY. He's a total and utter bastard. Bad guy's do Bad shit. As a writer myself, I find a lot of characters I create -particularly bad guys quite loathsome. but that's their function in a story. you want people to hate your villains! you want the audience to scream for the villain to get what's coming to him!

Just cause you write a racist doesn't mean you are one. You write a child murdering psycho, doesn't mean you are one ... Villains are meant to be hated. I guess that's why it was so satisfying to see Michonne get her much deserved vengeance on the bastard. Sadly, the narrow minded, judgemental fools wouldn't have seen that. Mainly because they brought their own political bullshit into reading a brilliant, well thought out, entertaining series, and decided that the second something happened that got their panties in a wad, they were out of here.

But I gotta say....If you going to give up on such a great piece of work after one issue, really, perhaps a comic as adult and mature as this is not for you. If your mentality is such that you think people reading this series would jerk off to the idea that a female character is being brutalised..... dude, clearly, your not of a mature enough mental state to appreciate The Walking Dead for what it truly is. People trying to survive in a world where the rules and ethics we know are gone. A reflection of what could, or would happen if mankind was faced with a disaster of such massive proportions. If society broke down to the Degree portrayed in The Walking Dead, would people set themselves up as little despots, like the governor?

You bet your ass they would

But, people would also fight to hold on to their humanity and not descend into such savagery, to build a community and keep themselves and their loved ones safe much like Rick and Tyresse are doing

Robert, please don't let any of this negative, ill conceived bullshit affect the way you write this series. Don't second guess yourself, because the people who truly grasp The Walking Dead will stick with it till the end

Anyway bitch over

Sorry, it just pisses me off when people bring their agenda -o- bu isht into the party without stopping to think for a moment about the context of the action that offended them

Question time!

I know you have no plans to reveal the cause of the Zombies... but it'd be really cool to see the characters throwing around theories on it. That was always one of my favourite moments in Romero's stuff, the guys just sitting around, throwing out their ideas on why it was all happening. A scene or two like that'd be nice

There's stuff like that in the future. It's coming, just give it time.

Rick's hand- forget the chainsaw! When the aliens show up around 75 or so, will he get a laser gun hand? :)

Heh... good one.

Astounding Wolf-man! Holy shit!!!! I love Zombies- My fiancée loves Werewolves! Robert, how did you know.....? Bring ng couples closer together- there's a cover blurb for you

Or maybe I'm trying to steal your fiancée? Ever think of that?

Army? Bikers? Redneck drunken farmer Zombie sweeper teams We seeing any of these guys anytime soon?

Eventually, sure.

Any new additions to the group coming along?

Yes, I don't get enough complaints about the large cast.

Um.....Is Michonne talking to herself or her sword?

Very insightful...

Brittney spears Zombie? forget that- Any plans for Henry Rollins to show up soon? Cause lets face it- If anyone's gonna survive the Zombie invasion, it's Henry- he's too fuckin' mean to get bitten.

Very true.

Check out Zombie Honeymoon if you ever get the chance. It's not a bad little flick

Wow, two recommendations in one letters column for a movie I've never heard of. I'm adding it to my Blockbuster Online queue right now.

I know you've got no plans to expand the series at all, or do a shit load of spin-offs, but an annual maybe? used to love annual's when I was a kid be nice to see them make a comeback. I sure wouldn't mind kicking an extra few bucks once a year for some extra Walking Dead. You could use the annual for a few shorter stories- other locations around the world, or the country, could pop in on Morgan and Duane, Maybe show the first few weeks of the outbreak.. just an idea

Probably never. I like the idea of 1-whatever being all you need to buy. I don't want people going "well, the annual takes place between 45 and 46." And stuff like that.

Invincible is still awesome

Yes.

Oh, yeah, before I go- this whole 28 days later thing- last time I had a letter printed, some poor soul went apeshit at me on account of my saying 28 days later didn't have real zombies.... Well they weren't! They weren't technical y dead rotting returned from the grave zombies!

Very true.

They were just poor shmucks infected with a virus..... look, okay flick, lost it a little when they left London, but they still weren't Zombies! Tom Savini himself said so, and he would know!

Take care, Robert,
thanks for a great book,

Cheers,
Jake Reedy

Thanks for writing.

Dear Kirkman,

I am amazed at how much attention Michonne's revenge is generating. The backlash is far greater than when the Governor raped her, which was treated more as a racial issue by the readership- which I have a problem with on multiple levels

Admittedly, Michonne being raped (even off screen) is particularly troublesome to me. I can think of no acts more vile and depraved than rape and child molestation. Both are worthy of the death penalty, in and of themselves. A resultant death/ murder would not be a prerequisite for lethal injection. Intuitively, I think there is a reason that child molesters are reviled even in a prison atmosphere

That said, I think that Michonne (that's right, even a comic book character) deserved her opportunity at revenge no matter how graphic it was portrayed. The absolute absurdity of calling the sequence "voyeuristic porn" says alot more about the author of that letter than the issue itself. Anything that has (or will?) befall the Governor is just not bad enough in my estimation.

Enough of that, though, as I think the perpetuation of the whole situation gives rise to a life of it's own, though I do not think it was as despised as the rape of Astoria in Cerebus. At least in that case the focus was on the act itself and not the ethnicity of the perpetrator or victim

Overall, I like the series. Sometimes I find myself picking at the little things. Like

the Cesar Martinez Traitor storyline just moving so swiftly and the amount of conversation that took place when Rick and all found the compound overrun by zombies when they got back from Woodbury but , in the main, the storyline stays with me for the month (?haha) leading up to the next issue. That tells me that you have produced something good there

I do like the latest twist that appears to have the Prison and Woodburyheaded on a collision course. Though it appears that the Prison is highly defensible Woodbury would have to overcome the wide open spaces around the prison, the 'biters' lurking there (which in some issues is a significant number) and the sniper capability that the towers affords Rick's group. The prisoners (ites?) would be able to pick off the able-bodied men and just take in the women and children so they could more readily contro the new population. Which may work unless the Woodbury women are all Michonne- ke, but let's not open another can of worms, right? Much less the grief I can envision for just atimating the women and children would be "controllable". Which does not look to be too far off from the current situation that is prevalent in Woodbury

Again, thanks for the good read

Dawson

PS. You said that you hope to go to 300 and beyond. Is that an open reference to the standard set by Dave Sim?

Of course. That's the benchmark set for creator-owned series, right? Sim and Gerhard are the best.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

I just finished reading Issue 33 of the Walking Dead, and for the first time in my life felt compelled to write a letter to a comic book.

I just want to say that I'm shocked, and I'm not going to ramble about not reading this book anymore, 'cause I love it (As I love to read all your books), but I do think that I will not be reading this issue again in a long time

I understand this was the effect that the issue was intended for (Shock), and again, this is not a critic, is a statement of facts, I still love the book, I loved the issue. but I'm shocked (it even made me look away from it at one point), so there, if that was the effect that you were looking for, at least in my humble person you got it

I know this letter is useless, but I felt this issue so much that I just had to write to you.

Loving this book and everything you write, keep up the good work

Oscar Baideras

Useless, I think not. It's good to hear the book is having an effect on people. Very cool.

Kirkman

a question for you

How come in vampire movies everyone already knows what a vampire is but in zombie movies no one has ever heard of a zombie before?

Good question, and I really don't know the answer. Maybe it has to do with the fact that zombies, MODERN zombies (created by Romero, based on I Am Legend by Richard Matheson) were only introduced in the late '60s while people have believed in Vampires for hundreds of years. I don't think anyone in real life has ever actually "believed" in zombies. So in Vampire movies--people aren't really reacting to the movies they've seen--and that's all they'd be doing in zombie movies and that'd be silly. Hey--maybe I did answer it.

In The Lost Boys, Salem's Lot, the Buffyverse etc. the struggle is for people to actually believe that vampires exist. Once they acknowledge that vampires are real, they immediately know all the other aspects of the mythos i.e. stakes, crosses, holy water, garlic and the like

In the Romero zombie movies, the Living Dead series, Resident Evil, Undead and even in your own fine series while people know the word "zombie" no one seems familiar with the cannon of zombie film and literature. Just once I would like to see a zombie movies where someone is like, "wow zombies, okay. shoot them in the brain, don't let them bite you, etc."

from a storytelling perspective I suppose that vampires have enough of a personality that you don't need to establish the rules of encountering vampires in order for the threat they pose to be dramatic, whereas with zombies the drama is in the protagonists learning how to stay alive as the zombies have no real personality or character

still is there an in-plot explanation for this? were all the guys who watched zombie movies eaten at some sort of Sex FI convention in the first hours of the outbreak? were they all dangerously over or underweight and thus easily bitten and turned? are there zombie movies in the world of The Walking Dead and, if so, where are the zombie movie aficionados?

Love the series,
Scott

If there are zombie movies in the world of The Walking Dead, I'd imagine nobody has seen them. It'd just be silly for them to be using movies as a guideline for what to do. It's shatter the semblance of realism, I'd think.

Dear Robert--

Wow! That must be the most racist statement I have ever seen in not just your comic, but in any comic I've ever read. "...A great deal of your white readers probably whacked off to that issue." It's so reassuring to know that "Charles ..." believes that every "white" person on the planet is a sexual deviant and pervert and that we all get sexually excited by scenes of rape and torture. Or maybe he's just projecting his own emotional response to the stimuli onto others so he'll feel less guilty about having these degenerate feelings. Seek help, Charles, you are not normal

And thanx to you, Kirkman, for a fun comic and for being king of the cliffhanger.

Sincerely,
A beige guy with undertones of magenta and veins of cyan.

Agustin Goba

Thanks for chiming in on the subject, Agustin.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

Is it your desire to run over mexicans with your car? or perhaps you wish to cut of your own hand and mutilate your man meat? It severely angered me when I read all those letters accusing you, of being a racist or it's every white man's dream to rape a strong black woman. What the hell is wrong with these people. It's a fucking fictional story and if you don't fucking like it don't fucking read it. I like how these people never commented on two little white girls getting brutally killed. They live in a brutal world and nasty shit is going to happen. No character is safe. Rick's hand was cut off, most of Hershel's kids are dead, the twins' parents are dead. If nothing happened to Tyreese or Michonne, how would they grow as characters? The Walking Dead is all about the characters. People should stop bitching and just realize we are in good hands. With that being said, I want to say thank you for all the great comics you've given us. I don't think I've ever enjoyed so many comics from one writer, ever. Some questions

1. When will we see posters, shirts, and toys for walking dead and invincible?

There's already been an Invincible T-Shirt and Poster. There's more in the works. There's a Walking Dead poster coming in September, keep an eye out for that. And as for toys... keep your eyes directed at the skies... there may be news just around the corner.

2. Will you be at San Diego Comicon this year?

Yep. I'll be at the Image booth for a while.

3. Would you name a mexican character after me? Please?

Nah.

4. I love getting walking dead twice a month...will this be happening again in the future?

Count on it. We're always messing up and playing catch up!

So, until aliens come down from from the sky and start raping humans and zombies make mine kirkman!!!

Charles Justis Velazquez

Thanks, sir.

Robert and TWD,
It's been a while since I've written to you regarding the book. I definitely enjoyed the Woodbury arc. I think the character arc for Rick, Tyreese, Hershel, et al, is amazing. I believe when you first set out to write this book you thought to yourself "In most Zombie stories there's always an evil-survivor-leader (i.e. The Mayor of Woodbury), but we really never see how that guy got so twisted." And then you came up with Rick. The loss of his hand, the willingness to do whatever is necessary to protect his family, and the moral ambiguity of his actions are all more signs that I believe that ultimately this will be the story of Carl (Luke) vs. Rick (Darth Vader). Just a thought.

Only time will tell.

Questions. Seriously, with the growing popularity of zombie films (i.e. J. Michael Straczynski adapting Max Brooks' "World War Z" for Brad Pitt's production company, 28 Weeks later, Day of the Dead remake, Romero's "Diary of the Dead," etc.) how have you not been approached to adapt TWD? Do you think they're (they being Hollywood execs") waiting for you to reach a certain number of issues before you're worthy of an adaptation?

Kermat Merl Key

The ways of Hollywood are strange and mysterious. Who knows why it hasn't happened yet. I doubt it's the number of issues published.

Hello,

I am writing in response to a letter that was printed in Walking Dead #35 by a Charles L. First, let me say that I have been a comic reader since my childhood and an avid reader since my teens through my age now of 38. I have never been motivated to write to a comics letter page. Until now. This motivation pertaining to Charles L. saying in his letter referring to Walking Dead issue #29: "If you want the honest truth Mr. Kirkman, a great deal of your white readers probably whacked off to that issue."

Let's be clear about this Charles. You are a RACIST. I was appalled reading your letter and hope you realize that your kind of mentality is exactly why racism exists. Any attempt you thought you were making to educate society about the evils of racism were effectively negated simply by your blatant ignorance. You should be ASHAMED of yourself for having made this statement.

I am truly sorry Mr. Kirkman and Walking Dead readers have to be subjected to hateful letters like that. But I'm also glad that letters are not censored and that you give people who write in an equal voice. I've thoroughly enjoyed reading Walking Dead. Please keep up the good work.

Thank you,
Matthew McDonough

Thanks for weighing in, Matthew.

Howdy Kirkman,

So your comic Walking Dead is pretty much the most amazing thing I've ever read. It truly shows the potential two niche storytelling genres, comics and zombies, has within it. Both take a skilful hand to tell a good tale, and to reflect reality in an unreal situation is an outstanding achievement. And so to see how much heat has been sparked because of the rape of Michonne is, at once, unsurprising and totally absurd.

Look, what happened was about the brutalization of a woman too strong for someone's liking. End of story. It wasn't about making a black woman strong only

to be taken down by a white man. It's not a jerk-off fantasy. It's about a particular situation where one particular woman with certain particular traits who pissed off another particular man with particular tastes. Do you think every crime to ever happen is based solely on race? Please. Come off it.

Things happen for different reasons because of the different people involved. These are characters that you've created, sure. But as any good writer knows, once the characters are created they pretty much have their own personalities and behaviours. That's what makes your story amazing is that you allow the characters to act accordingly; even if it does end tragically.

The world isn't PC, our real one and the one in Walking Dead. Things happen as they happen. If I wanted to get offended I'd ask why there are no gay characters, or biracial ones, or punk ones, or anything that comprises what I am. But I'm not offended. Why? Because the characters aren't me, and I know this. But I still love seeing how the characters unfold and act or react.

Your storytelling is amazing. And BIG ups to Charlie Adlard and Cliff Rathburn for the AMAAAZING art. Keep making awesome comics like this and I'll keep coming back for more. Anyone who doesn't is a damned fool.

Jeremy Alva

Sorry about the lack of gay biracial punks, Jeremy. I promise that by the time this series is over most every group of people will be represented and hopefully with more than just one character. I've got a lot of issues left in me.

Mr. Kirkman,

I've been reading Walking Dead since the very first comic, so I'm a longtime faithful reader. I know that you've been getting a lot of heat concerning the rape and later retribution of Michonne. I thought that I would give you a female view on this subject. And I'm not just writing as a female reader, but also as a rape survivor.

First of all - to all those men who wrote in complaining that you "took" power away from Michonne during the rape scene (which actually occurred off-screen) - the fact is, that you were showing the character of the Governor trying to take power from Michonne. Guess what? Rape happens everyday. Its ugly and its vicious, and its plain evil. But it happens to white women, black women, Asian women, Hispanic women.... well, you get my point? The rapist has no conscience... he doesn't care about the pain and suffering that he is putting his victim through. And it's a pain that lasts long after the actual act of the rape is done. One thing I've learned is that you gradually go from being a rape victim into a rape survivor. It's not an easy process and it usually takes years, but the thing is, you're never the same person again.

I want you to know, that as a rape survivor, I was not offended by Michonne's rape. The setting of the story is post-apocalypse, with all the barriers of civilization being broken down. Have your readers forgotten the quick breakdown of civil behavior during the aftermath of the Katrina hurricane? In reading your last comic, I think that the point you are trying to drive home is that man - and woman - can quickly lose grip of their humanity in extreme situations. Unfortunately, there are predators in the world who don't even need the pressure of a catastrophe to make them into rapists and murderers.

As for Michonne's retribution... yes, it was extremely violent, yet these readers who are complaining had no problem with zombies eating somebody's intestines or even the Governor hacking off Rick's hand? I don't condone extreme violence, but I also know that it's been a part of human history since the dawn of time.

Would I wish to have the same opportunity with my own rapist? At times, I do have a fantasy of him burning in hell... He was a serial rapist, and only he and God knows how many women he's hurt in his life. But I don't know if I would want to carry the burden of killing - or even just torturing - another human being with me. Yet, in Michonne's situation, there is no longer police to serve and protect, or courts of law to set up trial and punishment. The Governor had hurt so many people in the past, without a single thought of the pain he was inflicting on others, so I personally have no problems with Michonne acting as judge and jury in this case. The only alternative is her just running away earlier with Rick, leaving the Governor there to continue to hurt other people. And I'm not saying that she did it just out of a sense of protecting others - she definitely was making it personal retribution. But who can say how they would personally react in such extreme circumstances?

After what I call my Bad Incident, I couldn't even bear to watch violent movies for years - including my beloved horror movies. It took time for me to recover. I'd grown up watching all the classic horror movies - but now I often see horror movies as a commentary on our own society.

I think you really hit home with this when Rick hit Martinez with the camper without a second thought. Martinez should have not been so sneaky and had instead talked to the group about perhaps helping the women and children left at his camp. Instead of just running off, so he does share some responsibility for his own death. The fact that Rick later questions his actions and his lack of remorse asking if he what he's done is evil... that is what truly separates the type of person he is from the Governor.

Okay... besides all this "deep" stuff about the story and characters... I want to say that I LOVE your comic, and I'm glad that you are not afraid to tackle controversial storylines and characters. Please keep up the good work!

Valeria Baker

Thank you very much, Valeria. It's hard to respond to emails like this with more than a "thank you for writing" and I apologize for that. I appreciate the perspective you've shared and it's always good to hear from female readers.

Letters like this really do keep me going. I sit in a basement all day typing stories and I really have no idea how they'll be received or interpreted when I'm done. Thanks again for writing in.

And with that, folks, we wrap up another monstrous letters column.

This MAY be the last issue that ships before San Diego--so please, come on by and shake my hand if you come to that thing. I'll be at the Image and Marvel booths for scheduled signings. Should be easy to find.

I'll see you all back here again very soon.

-Robert

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Okay, I know we're putting out issues fast now. It seems like I'm doing a new letters column every week. Assuming there are no printer delays we will be putting out issues on a better than monthly schedule over the next few issues.

The statue by Clayburn Moore has been completed and should be available in stores very soon, I'm think over the next few months. The second piece of the diorama, an extra zombie coming after Rick has just been sculpted and painted and it's damn awesome. When the whole thing is done and can be put together it's going to be sweet.

When it's all done it'll be a cool scene of Rick facing off against three separate zombies. Cool stuff. Clayburn Moore is a genius.

Now, let's dive into the old mailbag and see what's what.

Robert,

I got into your book because I was bored. To tell you the truth, I really don't like comics very much. I liked "Wolverine: Origins" when that came out, which I also read out of boredom, but I usually don't give comics a chance. I was at my friend's house, I had just finished shooting a scene for an independent film I've been working on, I didn't have anything else to do, and my friend, was ironically enough, acting like a zombie. Let's just say he smokes Marlboro Greens more than he probably should. Anyway, so I was looking around for something to do, I mean, he had no cable, he didn't want to play Smash Bros, and I didn't want to go home because I knew the moment I got there, I would start editing the scene and I really wanted a break, so finally, I saw a few graphic novels sitting on the coffee table. They read "The Walking Dead" and they were volumes one through four. I figured "what the hell, I'll just flip through some pages. It's better than nothing." I flipped through the first four or so pages of the first issue and suddenly my mind nagged me to go back and actually read them, so I did, and to make a long story shorter, I've been hooked ever since.

Recently, I was finally able to catch up to all the released issues and, mark my words, one day, you or your agent will get a call from me where I will ask to have a meeting about making "The Walking Dead" into a live action feature film, that is, if no one beats me to it. By then, I will have a little more credibility and higher stature as a film-maker. It's your story telling, I feel so drawn to it, so immersed by it, and what makes it so bizarre is that you are able to do

this through a medium that I personally don't really even like. To me, comic books have always reminded me of looking through story boards, which is work to me. Not my cup of tea, but your work is different. I just wanted to let you know that you are working on such an amazing project, that even a person that cares not for the medium, loves it still.

That has got to count for something. Oh, out of curiosity, hypothetically speaking, if a film version of your story were to be made, would you rather it be in black and white? I've thought about this a lot, and to me, it would make for a nice contrasting style. I know it probably wouldn't be as marketable or distributable in the eyes of a run of the mill Hollywood studio, but artistically, I would rather see it sans color, like the book. It would also make all the special effects more convincing, and seeing as how there is so much blood in it, it might be the only way to get out of having an NC-17 rating.

Yeah, I don't really know. It'd be neat if it were in black and white, and you've got some valid reasons and benefits listed here, but I'm really not sure. If I had my druthers I'd certainly at least push for washed-out color, like Saving Private Ryan but maybe even a little closer to gray.

I was also wondering, what cover art for TWD do you like the best? The cover art for issue nine is my favorite as far as composition, style, color, and even beauty, but I love the symbolism, irony, and dichotomy shown in the cover for issue 21, especially by the addition of that one lone butterfly (which is probably what Carl and Sophia are looking at).

I really like Tony's covers to 23 and 24 quite a bit. Charlie and Cliff's cover to issue 28 is one of my all-time favorites for sure. It's always changing but for now I'd probably have to go with 33 being my favorite but the covers for 44-48 are goddamn stunning. You'll all see them very soon. They're great.

Mostly, I just wanted to let you know, that from a fellow storyteller to another, I really admire your work, I am drawn to it so much that it's hard for me to think about it objectively. I care about these characters man. Anyway, I hope you print this, if you do, I'll get to keep it as a memento of the first pseudo-conversation we had prior to hopefully working with you in the future.

Sincerely,
Chuck Meré

Okay, you've got my contact info future-Spielberg. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Mr. Kirkman,

I've been reading Walking Dead since the very first comic, so I'm a longtime faithful reader. I know that you've been getting a lot of heat concerning the rape and later retribution of Michonne. I thought that I would give you a female view on this subject... and I'm not just writing as a female reader, but also as a rape survivor.

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Valeria

Thank you very much for writing in and sharing your experience. I really appreciate it.

Dear Robert,

One of the main reasons I find The Walking Dead to be the greatest book out is the questions of morality which are raised on nearly a monthly basis. In a world populated by constant horror and death, ethics clearly change. Most recently, Rick's murder of Martinez displayed a sort of kill or be killed ethics. As a police officer, Rick represented one of the last standing enforcers of the old world's sense of right and wrong. However, at this point in the story, the issue of right and wrong is nearly gone completely. While most people's sense of morality allows for one to value the life of their family over others, I get the feeling that Rick would perform the most heinous sorts of acts to ensure his family's safety. Yet even as Rick's actions become less and less noble in the traditional sense of morality, I still think he's doing the "right" thing. As a student of philosophy, these gray areas fascinate me.

I was wondering if you have had the chance to read The Road (2006) by Cormac McCarthy. The book has many parallels to TWD. The story follows a father and son trying to survive in a post-apocalyptic world. While there are no flesh eating zombies, the father and son must escape constant danger from starvation and fend off attacks from bands of cannibals. At one point in the story, the author even refers to the father and son as "the walking dead." Like TWD, hope has been nearly destroyed by the state of the world, and morality has been whittled down to bare survivalism. It's a great, quick read, and judging by your work, I think you'd appreciate it.

Thanks for getting me into comics.
Greg Theilmann, San Diego, CA

The Road, huh? I'll have to check it out.

Robert Kirkman,

"issue 37-- which will be IN STORES before the end of MARCH." Not that I'm bitching but why do you set yourself up for the readers to fill up Letter Hacks with complaints about the book not being on time?

Anyway, great comic book! I've been with you since issue 8 and am never disappointed with the story or

art. You have several very good comics out every month (well, almost) and for that I don't mind the wait. Please, keep up the good work.

Matt Coppins

Well, there's not much I can do once a book is out of my hands. There are a lot of times when

things seem 100% ready to happen... and then don't. For instance, I said 39 would be out two weeks after 38. Now, I turned it in two weeks after 38, so in a perfect world it would have shipped two weeks after 38. But I forgot it was around the time of the big Comic-Con International in San Diego. During this time everyone and their brother is printing up everything but the kitchen sink for the con. So 39 got lost in the shuffle and as I type this, still isn't out, but looks like it's going to be three or even four weeks after issue 38. I'm hoping for four.

Now, 39 isn't even out yet and I'm writing this letters column to send in with issue 40, with 39 pushed back a bit, this issue should be in stores sooner than a month after issue 39, but y'know... I don't know for sure.

I get excited too, that's what it really burns down to. I like to get these books out and I try to give you letters column readers a heads up. I really should stop, though... it's getting ridiculous. So I'm not going to be making predictions anymore. I'm just going to try and turn the books in as fast as I can and keep working.

We'll see how that works out.

Dear Kirkman:

Greetings and salutations, I recently had a fest with your Walking Dead, from #1 to #36 last night.

I usually spend some time with my friends, mostly rolling polyhedrons, watching geeky movies, drinking coffee and talking about you (yeah, you) and your colleagues. That's how I knew that the Ultimate Cable guy had made a comic book about zombies, survival horror and stuff.

At first, I must confess, didn't have much faith because all the zombie comics I had read in the past were pretty ugly (I mean, Resident Evil comic books, anyone?), but I when I knew that was a B/W, old-school, made by a zombie geek comic; well I had at least to see it.

And well, what can I say? I just loved it!

I know that many readers can say at least the same, but the reason of writing these lines is to support you in the now controversial issue about the raping, the racism and the pornographic violence in your comic (?).

Please don't listen seriously to all that aggressive words from the kind of people who need the Comic Code Authority to decide for them what can and what cannot read, I like to think that we're all grown up guys who can difference the reality from the fiction.

I could say something about the behavior of ordinary human beings in extreme situations and illustrate it with the raping camps and other aberrations proper of the wartimes, but I don't like to make politics of an entertainment product which is not oriented to do it. And it won't be anything we haven't heard before.

So what I want to say is thank you for being honest with yourself, your characters and us, your devoted public.

Sincerely,
Juan M. Trillo

PS: Please forgive the broken English.

Honestly didn't notice any.

PS2: I loved the Christmas story in issue #34, and it made me think: what about a backup story of each main character before the zombie infestation? Like an average day in the life of (not like LOST, but well, yeah, exactly like LOST). Think about it.

Yeah, I'm not going to be purposefully cribbing something from lost any time soon. At least not until issue 43. I do try to keep this book as original as possible.

Thanks for writing, I plan to stick to my guns on all issues. Don't worry.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

This issue was pretty okay, dawg. In Idol-ese, the beginning was "karaoke", but the last half or more was "magic". I kinda enjoyed your little backstory in the letters column this ish! 1990? Why such a late bloomer? Didn't most people Grow Up Reading comics? Like me for instance! If you were born in '78 or '79, I was probably reading comics b4 you were Born. I dunno if you answered this question in #37's column, but I'd like to ask what really got you into comics specifically...was it one series, a particular issue? My older brother got me reading comics by, well, giving me some of his to read; probably the only nice thing he ever did for me! I guess if I'd have to go to a particular series that jump-started my collecting career, it'd be Avengers.

My dad got me into it. I'd read a comic here or there before sixth grade but I was really into baseball cards. The baseball card shop in my small Kentucky town also sold comics. So one time when my dad had taken me there--he bought about 12 consecutive issues of IRON MAN. It was the Armor Wars II Mandarin/Fin Fang Foom stuff by John Byrne and John Romita Jr. He had been a huge fan of The Metal Men when he was a kid and he thought IRON MAN was a modern offshoot of that book. I stumbled onto those books and next time I went into that store... I bought some comics with my baseball cards.

If there's still time I'd like you to warn the TWD characters taking the van to look for the...place with more weaponry, that even if they Do find it they might not have a prison to come back to! And the Woodbury guys already are searching and have their weapons. Funny that Walking Dead and JLA Classified have the exact same issue count, huh? Both at #37. Funnier still, they're making a big deal out of Carlos D'Anda and Kid Amazo.

There was a wedding this issue. The priest-guy.. Rick?..even read from the Bible. I guess you do that at weddings. Most religious thing I've seen in this book ever. In the flashback at the beginning--I Think it was a flashback--Shane and Lori were talking about the government? Was that b4 the plague (or whatever) had spread too badly, or what? It occurs to me that no actual zombies, or walking dead guys, were used this issue!

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

The flashback in issue 37 continued from the flashback in issue 7. So it was during the time Rick was in a coma, but after the zombie plague had started.

Robert, (is "Ye, Gods" played out?)

I recently fired off an email to Invincible (LOVE IT), and now, after having just read #37 of TWD, I'm sending one here. I used to write letters to comics when I was younger, but none were ever printed; however, due to the fact that you print more letters than anyone I've ever seen--and, that you answer them yourself--there was an incentive for me to sit at my computer and try again.

You're in luck. I'm thinking about printing your letter.

I'm 36 years old and have been a comic collector since the age of 12/13. Although I did get into the traditional superhero stuff e.g. Daredevil, Spider-man, etc. I also liked darker, more mysterious material, as well. When Frank Miller did his run on Daredevil with Mazzuchelli, it appealed to me so much more than the ad nauseum repetitions of a new super villain every issue with no true feeling of consequence. These days, titles like Sin City, 100 bullets, Criminal, etc. jazz me up a lot more than crossover after crossover of mindless men-in-tights drivel. This love for more adult oriented storytelling, combined with my love for horror movies and great advice from 2 wise, wise men (what's up, Neil and Chris!!) brought me to TWD.

I'd love to go on and on about how much fun I have reading this book, Robert, but it's nothing you haven't heard before. What I would like to address briefly is my continued hope that you will NEVER, EVER pull any punches or tame your material down because a bunch of sissy-boys might get offended or some sanctimonious pseudo-intellectual might send you some whiny screed on how this or that is a reflection of societal oppression blah, blah, blah. I'm referring, of course, to some of the reactions you got to your depiction of the whole Governor/Michonne situation. Especially, when some people tried to speak for your inner thoughts and beliefs, particularly by accusing you of being sexist/racist. I'm impressed by how you handled those letters by not collapsing into a heap of jelly and defending your story. This is a cruel world--both in the real world and, especially, in the TWD one--and bad things happen. It's unfortunately symptomatic of our PC society to label anything perceived as negative towards certain individuals/groups as racist, etc. Not to overstate it, but how dare they pretend to know what you think, Robert, or, for that matter, what the rest of us do!

Anyways, I've got so much more to say to praise the unbelievable work that you, Charlie, Cliff and Rus are doing on this title, but I'd like to get printed, so here are some numbered questions:

I do print some letters that don't have questions... I swear.

1. Is Charlie as amped about doing this book forever as you yourself are? Man, I hope so. His artwork is EXACTLY how this book needs to look!

I wouldn't say he's as amped as me, but he's definitely on board for the long haul. I know he enjoys it but I wouldn't presume to have him on board for life. He's not going anywhere any time soon.

2. For the first time, in issue #37, we got somewhat of a flashback with Lori thinking about Shane. Does this mean you may use flashbacks to give us--FINALLY--some backstory on characters like Michonne? We're dying to read it, man!

The first flashback was actually at the beginning of issue 7. This is the second. I don't plan on using them too often but maybe every now and then--and only when the event ties in with what I've got going on in the main story.

3. In the interview at the back of #37, you mentioned that at the beginning you had the story mapped out up to its current position. Do you have the next 37 more or less figured out?

Oh, yeah. Definitely. There is also stuff that would be taking place way after this stuff happening now that I had planned in the beginning. It was a very rough outline but I always knew I was leading up to this stuff. And y'know, since then I've been plotting further and further ahead as I go along... of course--there's still stuff I always make up on the fly while I'm writing... it keeps things fresh.

4. Will Carl ever take his hat off? Dale, I understand, because it designates him clearly as "Dale", but Carl?

He takes it off from time to time.

5. Can you promise us loyal readers that you will tell the story you want to tell for us grown-ups here, and not balk at showing terrible things? I know you haven't yet, but I hope the whole tempest over the torture thing hasn't left you gun-shy.

Trust me, there's more to come on that front. By the time we reach issue 50 it'll be clear that I'm not pulling any punches.

Thank you for your time and for doing your part to keep comics a legitimate medium!

By the way, I also love the Ant-man title and anxiously look forward to The Wolf-man!!

Jonathan Radmer

Yay, The Irredeemable Ant-Man and The Astounding Wolf-Man! Very cool, thanks for reading.

Kirkman--

Issue #37! Yay!

Yay-fuckin'-yay-yay! Really beautiful work, all around.

QUESTION! Do all the character moments get written

at the same speed as the plot-driven stuff? Or do they accrue over time?

Good stuff,
Andrew Garcia-Price

Hm. Well, the issues themselves in script form get written chronologically almost as you would read it. I start on page one and write until I'm on page 22 but before that there's a plot stage where I map everything out on paper. The character stuff is scrawled out in notes and sometimes things get shifted back into another issue to save space or so I can lead up to a moment. The plot stuff and the character stuff is more often than not just written at the same time as I go along. Does that explain it at all?

It would be very cool if you guys decide to include a poster in one of the upcoming issues.

I really want one.

Good job guys, this comic is great!

Jose Pinal

Well, there's not a poster contained in this issue, but there IS an ad for one. You'll find it shortly after this letters column. You can buy it in whatever store you purchased this comic. Tell them Dave sent you!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I am writing this to let you know that I love this book. I just recently got on board and started with the trades and quickly got caught up so now I'm up to issue 37. This series is one of the best out there! I think one of the better sequences I've read thus far is the one with Rick questioning his humanity after he killed Martinez who was essentially spying for the governor and his bitches. I loved it and it spoke to me. I could conceive of myself, put in a similar situation, doing the exact same thing for my family. Making those choices wouldn't be so tough once you put it in perspective.

I also have a gripe to pick with all those people who wrote in and complained about the extended torture scene with Michonne. I don't get what they are upset about at all. The book is called *The Walking Dead* not *The Walking Unliving Enjoying Lunch In Your Garden*. **(but maybe it should be? -Robert)** First and foremost this is a zombie book by the title alone. One should expect all the violence and agony that goes into something like that. And like you said, if people get turned off by one book then what's that say about them? I myself loved the torture scene and I felt it was very gratifying in every respect. You made the governor a complete prick and we, well most of us, wanted to see that extended torture scene to see him get his comeuppance. I feel that those people who wrote in complaining about it are part of the conservative America that I despise. I mean come on, if pushing the boundaries with some sex scenes isn't going to set off alarms with these people why should a torture scene? The way I see it is it's hypocritical of them. Comic artists and writers have been fighting the good fight for freedom of expression for a long time and you can't get your panties in a bunch with a title such as this if you have a problem with a little violence. I say keep up the good work and giving us great stories month in and month out.

Well, in defense of the people who balked at the horror... this series, according to the sales figures, is reaching a pretty broad audience. I've gotten mail from people who just read Marvel books who have given this title a shot. So, we're not ALL horror fans here, who are used to seeing and hearing far worse than what's portrayed here in our favorite movies.

And that's okay. I'd like this book to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. And it's COOL that stuff in this book can make people flinch and respond so strongly. Doesn't mean I'm going to quit doing such things, just to appease those fans... just like I'm not going to put in more gore and more zombie action just to appease those fans.

This book is what it is, and really, the most important member of the audience is myself. Meaning, if I don't like it, I can't write it... so thus far I've just been doing what interests ME at whatever given moment and I'll probably just continue doing that, because that keeps me interested in the series and keeps me interested in writing scripts.

Keeping Charlie interested isn't a bad thing either, but I think I'm doing that as well.

So anyway, I don't mind the crazy response from fans. At the end of the day, it just means people are vested in the series and sucked into the story enough to garner a reaction... and really, that's more than I could have ever hoped for with this book. So it's all good.

That said, to reiterate about the interactions with Rick, Tyreese, and everyone else there it's just pure magic. I read these books now to see what happens next to these people because you've made me care about them. The zombies are an afterthought almost, because the real drama is what's happening behind those walls.

Heh--some issues they're certainly an afterthought for me!

Thanks again for taking the time to read this and I can't wait to see what Lori tells Rick in 38! I've got goosebumps already!

Sincerely,
Gabriel

Well, I hope it went the way you DIDN'T expect it to. Thanks for writing.

That's all the time we have here at Letter Hacks central. Be on the lookout yesterday for issue 41. We're incorporating brand new time machine technology to get you that issue BEFORE this one. This time I swear! We're on time, baby!!

Sigh.

See you next issue.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

And here we are at issue 41. I'm preparing for San Diego, the big Comic-Con International and I'm trying to make sure this issue goes to the printer before I leave... so, y'know... no time for the chatty chat.

So let's dive into the letters!

Wee! (probably not all that appropriate after the end of this issue, but y'know, whatever).

Greetings Kirkland,
I've been keeping up with the walking dead since issue one, never read any of your other stuff. However as a 29 year old black male there are some concerns I have with your writing.... I'm concerned that you're going to let all these outside opinions about you being "Racist" affect the writing of the greatest zombie comic ever written. I'm proud of my black heritage, but I honestly felt that the events that happened to Michonne in issue 29 were not the result of a racist writer, but in actuality was the fucked up hand survivors get dealt in a world full of cut throats and zombies. I was horrified by what happened to homegirl in issue 29 but it only made the book a more intense read. (besides Rick is missing a hand, that's pretty brutal, too.) I consider your book an entertaining glimpse into a world of "Survival Horror" I don't relate to any of the characters any more or less because their race. I look at how well each character can adapt to the situations they are confronted with. I read the angry letters in issue 35 and although the whole "chocolate rape fantasy" accusations were funny, don't lose any sleep over it, man.

The Walking Dead is hands down the best zombie comic I've ever read. Please don't let your team get all soft over a few angry fans. You have the support and \$2.99 of this BLACK man every time I hit the comic shop.

One of your biggest and BLACKEST fans,

G. Washington

Thanks so much for the words of encouragement. I know I've said this many times over the last few letters columns, but again, there's no worry of me curbing my plans to appease the fan mail. I'm just doing what I want. It's what I've been doing since the beginning and the book is doing very well, so I don't have any plans to change the way I do things now.

Dear Robert,

My name is Martin Casanova, and I'm from Argentina. Before *Marvel Zombies*, I hadn't read anything from you, and that mini-series was a pleasant surprise. I don't think of myself as a zombie fan, but I loved "28 days later..." and "Shaun of the Dead".

I've been a comic book fan since 1989 (yeah, *that* Tim Burton movie...) and nowadays I have my own Buenos Aires based comic book company. It's just taking off, but we had 600 people at our last graphic novel presentation, and that's really promising, right?

Anyway, I just finished reading the first 33 issues of *The Walking Dead* in two days and I'm simply hooked. *I love it*. And reading it from a publisher point of view, I can't help but wonder "Why haven't I thought of this?". The book is a fun read, it's well written, and you never know what's coming next. It reminds me of the best Preacher issues. Oh, and the artwork is just amazing.

I think I'm three or four issues behind, but I don't know what it'll be like waiting 30 days to get the following chapter... While I read it, I thought it'd do a great live action series. If they let Nip/Tuck get away with all the gross operations...

Congratulations on a great book that is enjoyable anywhere in the world.

Best regards,
Martin Casanova

Glad you liked it, thanks for writing.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Well, first off let me start by giving a huge CONGRATS on joining the parenting world, I hope you both enjoy every up and down as much as I do.

Okay with that said...

I have decided to finally write once and for all....

I will begin with a little info about myself, I am a 28 year old single mother...

I became addicted to TWD since I came across the first issue, and I still am a huge fan, and although I am not some goth girl I have been horribly obsessed with zombies since I was a kid....actually I am in the middle of writing my own take on it....but that's another letter....I have to say yours has been one of my favorite storylines in this genre....with that said

I just wanted to point out that since the whole

brew-ha-ha over the Michonne ordeal and torture of the gov and all....

Well I have noticed almost if not every printed letter was written by a guy....

That is true, I don't always read the names of the letter writers, so it's not something I notice unless it's in the body of the email. But yeah, it seems we've got a largely male fan base here on the book. I try to print all the letters from women just to try and even things out.

Now I am not some crazy bra burning man hating type of gal....

I just thought it might be a nice change to see what a woman thinks about it....

So here it goes....

I myself relate very personally with what Michonne went through in the comic....and to be honest I was hoping for more brutality against that douche bag.

I have read all sorts of things about this and yes it is probably a dead (no pun intended) subject but I just had to write...

Don't worry... the way things are going it may never die...

First off let's start by saying that if anyone thinks it was racist...well...that is utterly absurd.....mainly due to the fact that Michonne is the most bad ass out of all the women, and with that..... she was the only female character strong enough to pull through such an awful situation and fight back for herself...she actually epitomizes the term strong black woman....a lesser woman would have died.....or ratted out the others.... so let's just let that issue go shall we....if it is racist to have 3 of most interesting and strong characters be african-american....than I suppose I am confused about what racist means.

Second,rape yes is very ugly and scary and it is a million times worse in "real" life....and unfortunately it may happen to someone if one day zombies were to take over the world, and the living consequently were forced into a post-apocalyptic mad max survival type of world...but what is scarier is that it happens everyday...

Instead of writing nasty hate mail to the author of a fictional comic character maybe it would suit those people more to put their efforts and voices towards a different aspect of society that may deal with "real" people that were "really" raped....

The sad fact is that stuff goes on every single flipping day, and you don't see people getting all pissed off about it....and why?

Because they don't see it, it is just some far away idea....well I am so sorry that while you were reading your comic about the walking dead, with images of god knows how many different types of violence and gore, you were offended by the image of a woman being raped....sorry to burst your bubble, and that you had to find out the world isn't a safe candy filled land with smiling unicorns and caramel filled chocolate trees.... welcome to the human fucking race and thanks for finally joining the group...oh and why not be a bit more creeped out about the people who were just a bit too eager to show how much they enjoyed that scene....

And to the persons who thought the torture was too brutal....ugh, the f*cker deserved way worse, and I wish it would have been the whole issue....but that is just me....

Maybe it would happen less in real life if someone was faced with getting horribly mutilated and tortured.... but who cares about that.... just continue on along ranting about a fictional world while the real one around you burns...but I suppose that now includes me and I am a hypocrite....but at least I notice it and admit it....and getting over the denial is the hardest part.

So here's to you Mr. Kirkman....keep writing intriguing storylines.....and shocking the shit out of people... it may be the only time they will ever recognize the world around them and not look away....

I will continue to buy your comics and be a huge fan.....I sure do hope you print this....although I doubt they will since it is so long....but hell if you cut out the profanities and most of the subject matter perhaps it will be more tolerable in print.....and it would just be freaking cool as hell to see my name in my favorite comic....congrats again on the little one...

Sincerely,
Karlth Cashion

Oh, we love long letters here at Letter Hack's central. And don't mind the profanity, we're all about that too. Thanks for taking the time to write.

YO Robert,

Chiming in late about the story with Michonne, I reserved judgment until the story concluded unlike many of these bleeding hearts who just immediately lashed out at you for your story then "dropped your book" (morons). A story with a STRONG BLACK WOMAN (god forbid) who came back from the bad place she was in and then kicked the ass of her attacker (Go Michonne). What did people expect from a HORROR comic, fuzzy bunnies and easter baskets?! Screw that! keep the F'D up stories coming Kirkman, that's what I at least expect from a HORROR comic with ADULT themes. Your doing a kick ass job considering the number of titles you write every month. Until the Aliens show up a hundred issues from now MAKE. MINE. KIRKMAN. Invincible, Walking Dead, Ultimate X-Men! What am I missing? I know you're writing more.

Matt McIntyre

Irredeemable Ant-Man (for a few more issues at least), Marvel Zombies, The Astounding Wolf-Man and a few things that are yet to be announced. I like to keep busy.

Man... I hope things go back to normal with the mail soon. I really, REALLY appreciate the support but it does start to feel like I'm getting the same letter over and over.

Dear TWD,
I have to start by saying that this comic has completely amazed me. I've never been into comics let alone collecting them but since I started reading TWD I've done little else. What originally attracted me to this comic was Tony Moore, I've been a big fan of his in

the last year or so and had slowly started checking into comics he was involved with when I discovered TWD. Since I bought my first issue about three months ago I haven't stopped purchasing anything with its title attached to it. I want to let everyone involved with this comic know that it is pure perfection from start to finish, with a captivating story that keeps you on the edge of your seat every issue to the amazing illustrations. I would also like you to know that I love the letter hacks, I do, in fact, read each and everyone. The questions that your fans write in about are great most of the time and I love the fact that you take the time to write responses. Thank you Mr. Kirkman and everyone else involved with the creation and or printing of this amazing story.

Your appreciative fan
Josh Hart

Well, sir, thanks so much for the far-to-kind words. It's always good to hear about people picking up the book and really liking it. It's good to know there are some people here to replace all the people who are quitting the book due to all the violence and racism.

As a employee of Wal-mart, laughed my butt off when they got busted looting Wa-mart!!!!Thanks for the book!!!!!!!!!!!!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

Hey--I used to work at Wal-Mart, too! We can be Wal-Mart buddies! I mean, ahem--we can be Wal-Mart buddies!!!!!!!! (better?)

Hey

I've been itching to write a letter to you for some time but I've never really had too much to say other than praise/questions and where would that get us ...nowhere.

I try to read the letter columns as much as possible (I might pick up something I didn't already know). Then I read in geek how much of your time it eats up. I wanted to say I love the columns 38 was awesome due to the numb skull talking about T&A and Religion (funny stuff). Anyways I thought I would tell you I think you're a lucky bastard to go from reading comics, to working at a store, to doing your thing with Funk-O-Tron, Image, and now working for marvel in such a short time (dream come true, right?). What's marvel got you slated for next?

A few things, but nothing I can talk about right now. It really is a dream come true. I mean, this is what I wanted to do as a kid and I'm doing it and making a decent living at it. It just doesn't get any better than this. I'm very content. And as far as the letters columns go, I do like doing them, but they are a bit of a pain in the ass, they take a bunch of time.

Have you ever seen a movie about the rapture from the 70's or 80's involving tattoos of the mark of the beast and it ending were the believers were cast out of the community and died of starvation? Total ridiculous and from my childhood but I can't find anything about it (like a name) it never hurts to ask right?

Envied by,
Ed Kelsey

Hm, I don't know what movie that is... but I'm interested. Can anyone else help us out? Please?

P.S. How big of a bite did you swallow to reprint 35?

Well, quite a big one. It took my cut of the profits from 35 and part of 36 to cover the printing bill on the corrected version of 35. It's my own damn fault though... I should have looked at those proofs. It kills me that it's the only time in the history of me doing comics that I've forgotten to look over the proofs... and a page got duplicated. I mean--what are the odds. So I basically wrote 35 for free and wrote 36 at a discount. But really, it was worth it to not have to put up with a misprinted book being out there. And the messed up issue 35 repeated page 21 where 22 should have been... so there was no cliffhanger, the whole ending was blown. There was no way I could let that go out.

Live and learn.

Robert Kirkman!

Just finished #38, Letter Hacks and all. It made me come and piss and shit myself, all at the same time, while still keeping the comic in near mint condition (9.2). So two weeks until #39, huh? I'll believe it when I see it. But it's always worth the wait. In #38, what's up with the old long haired fella's overuse of the phrase, "You follow me?" Perhaps he's overused it before, and I just hadn't noticed.

Maybe Axel says more than usual in 38 but he says that after almost every line of dialogue he's ever spoken. It's a personality tick, something he's done for as long as he's been in the book. Check back, you'll see.

Race was a big issue in #38's Hacks. I guess it's a big issue anywhere. Would you allow me to comment on the subject?

At least you asked first... I'm a bit sick of the subject, but go ahead.

If so, here's my comment!

As I understand big boy capital "S" Science, everyone is ultimately descended from folk who came from Africa. Google that shit if you don't believe me, each and every human being on this planet comes from one black man and one black woman. Different skin color, different hair color, stuff termed "racial characteristics" by one ass or another, is the result of evolution, human beings adapting to different climates and environments, and shit. That's why the mole-men are so pale and have such big eyes.

My creationist background argues a bit with your theory... and I've seen some paintings of Adam and Eve... and heck for that matter Jesus himself that go against your argument. **joking**

So we're all the same race, is basically what Science has uncovered here. Everything else is just cultural, different cultures conflicting for whatever reasons different cultures conflict. And that shit could be dealt with, so easy. Does the problem lie with the unwashed masses or the washed controllers of the masses? In the end, both master and slave castes, each and every one of us that is, are all trapped in some perverse geo-social realpolitik gangbang, forced to service an invisible partner who wields an iron three-pronged prick. That's what I think, anyway.

Wow... the discussion kinda ramped up there for a bit, eh?

What's with not using thought balloons or captions? Cinematic effect? I wonder how many people besides me had no idea it was June, 2004, TWD time, until you said it in a response to an email. I'm not saying you should denote the passage of time - having the characters and the readers unaware of exactly how much time has passed makes both groups disoriented and contributes to the suspense. But it is nice to have a frame of reference, I'm glad you let us in on that shit.

Well, it's not really important to the story and I really don't keep too close of an eye on it. So a running tally would just be a pain in my ass to keep track of.

You said you'd hook up anybody with a proper copy for the #35 misprint variant. Howsabout hookin' me up with the misprint in exchange for the regular one? And www.mycomicshop.com totally rules. Word.

I've only got like two or three of them myself... sorry. I've got none to spare.

Godboy Andrew J. Shaw wondered why no God in TWD. In my humblest opinion, I think after a zombie apocalypse, most everyone would wise up real quick to what's really going down with the whole bearded dude in the sky thing. It is my contention that one should not pander to the religious set anymore than one should pander to the people with what should be considered cultural hang-ups.

Aside from my more than likely inappropriate joke earlier I really don't want to get into a huge religious debate. Living in Kentucky some of my closest friends are religious and I believe their faith would very much survive this type of situation. And there's nothing wrong with that. I believe that was touched on a bit in this very issue.

Presumptuousness Dept.: If you like Nick Cave you should check out Will Oldham's Bonnie Prince Billie stuff; you've probably heard it already but if you haven't, there you go. "I See A Darkness" is the best, I think. Do you watch any soap operas? "As the World Turns" is fun stuff.

Only "Passions" whenever I catch it on TV... that shit is INSANE!

Alright, man, Letter Hacks rules, the comic rules, everything totally rules.

Rev. Occulto

Thanks for writing.

Dear Robert (Bohab) Kirkman,

This comic is the sweetness. I had never picked up a comic in my 20 years until I happened to see that there was a George Ramono-ish zombie comic book out and that it was freaking awesome. Since then I have indulged in many different comics and have opened up to many different genre's of comic book. I have bought every single issue and trade and have both hardbound copies out because I want to see this book go beyond its 100th issue (which should be an extra spectacular double sized anniversary issue). But I got a favor to ask... please put me in one of the issues letter sections! Just a name in some random spot. It would be sweet to see my name in the comic book that got me into comic books. Oh Yeah, and those people that say you're too edgy with your work and that you are racist... they're scared because they would be the first

to go in the zombie holocaust.

Your fan till the apocalypse,
Matthew Barker

Consider your request honored. Call my silly, but I kinda like the idea of The Walking Dead not really having anniversary issues per se. Issue 25 was a major turning point but not double-sized or special in any other way. Issue 50 will be the same way. Maybe... MAYBE when we make it to 100 we'll go all out... but really, I'm kinda against it at this point.

Dear Robert Kirkman

I have been reading the walking dead since it started (I forgot how many years ago).

Four years this October. Yes, we will have done 43 issues in 4 years. So we missed 5 months... in FOUR YEARS. Not bad for an independent comic... and I really honestly think that may be the best record for an independent comic out there... most definitely way up there.

I am a big zombie fan I read your marvel zombies collection and I thought that was a masterpiece man. You were my inspiration for my play Not Another Zombie Outbreak (I am only 16 years old). It was a smash hit at my school and it won an award for best One act play. You are the man with the plan when it comes to Zombies dude. I will follow you until you stop writing the Walking Dead (I'm not trying to sound like a stalker). also keep writing for Marvel, you add that little spice to them I haven't seen in a while. Keep up the good work and I hope you are honored that you are my inspiration.

Your fanboy
Zack Lippy aka Farmer Joe

I am so honored that I have inspired... Zippy Lippy, aka Farmer Joe.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

One of these issues, when someone shoots at a zombie, it's gonna turn out to be some dude with a hangover walking funny; I would love to see that!

So you're really an atheist, huh... or was that a Pagan? Sorry, I always get those two confused. I don't think it'll stop me reading your books, well except one... the one that got canceled. I actually thought that 'Irredeemable' was just hitting it's stride! But any way you sugar coat it: it's still Ant-Man, so. Everyone knows that Kirkman should be writing Spider-Man or the Incredible Hulk or Wolverine Origins anyway, right?

You're starting to win me over... but really, there's a huge difference between Pagans and Atheists, you should do some research, my friend.

I am getting to know the characters names a bit more now, after over a year of consecutive reading or so. I guess I can understand the whole Gilligan's Island/ Scooby-Doo approach of not using last names, especially with such a large cast; just make sure you use the first names a bit more.

I'll do my best, Andrew.

Had a letter printed in issue #38; you didn't bother to tell me...us...how a zombie is created, just that it's not

through biting. Are we ever gonna discover why some people were affected by the zombification, and others not?

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

I don't really remember showing anyone who isn't affected by the zombification. Basically, the rule is: WHATEVER it is that causes the zombies, is something everyone already has. If you stub your toe, get an infection and die... you turn into a zombie. UNLESS your brain is damaged. If someone shoots you in the head and you die... you're dead. A zombie bite kills you because of infection, or blood loss... not because of the zombie "virus." Make sense?

And please (I worry that the next six letters columns will be about religion) don't take the Atheist thing too harshly. I've got nothing against religion, I think it's swell, I just personally don't buy it. I try to display a fair portrayal of it in the book... and I'll probably delve a little deeper into it with coming issues.

Hey Robert Kirkman!

EGads! I've been found!

I would like to take this time to respond to Mr. John W who's letter made print in issue # 37 of TWD, found the zombie on the top of page 2 in TWD #35 a little conspicuous.

Yup. It's me. Charlie was gracious enough to help me with my little campaign to become "a glorified comic book extra". A most awesome moment appearing in a most awesome book. Thanks again.

And Robert, this isn't the first time I've snuck my way into your books. I'd like to draw your attention to page 2 in *Invincible* #37. Ah HA! "One please".

Hopefully, plans are I'll be making it into another of your books creating a "Kirkman Trifecta!".

I hope all the books I buy get your child through college. Thanks for making comics a great hobby, and Charlie, thanks for making me a part of that hobby.

Sincerely,
Jeff J

Yeah, sure man... that zombie is you. Likely story. You're going to get everyone and their brother emailing Charlie to ask him to draw them in the book--and that's no good. Shame on you Jeff J... SHAME!

Sir,

Please feel free to skip this first bit, it's nothing but the usual: love *The Walking Dead*, excellent job, first time writing to a comic, keep it up!

I'm only going to say one thing about the continual controversy over the Michonne rape that has really been done to death, and that is that I think it's a positive thing that a comic can generate such discourse. Genuine reader reaction and debate over issues highlighted is always good to see, so I'd take it as a generally positive thing.

I really do. I know I've been complaining a bit

about it in the letters column as of late (mostly in jest) but I do think it's great that people care deeply enough to write in, whether it be positive or negative.

Anyhow, on to the real reasons for writing. I've been a huge fan of the series for a while now, however reading Issue 38 I was suddenly struck by two things:

Rick knows that the child isn't his. Now this in itself isn't a huge revelation, but it was that I cared; and I suddenly realized that you've managed to trick me into watching some zombie apocalyptic version of *Eastenders* (a British soap if it's not know over there, which I hope it isn't). I don't know if that's a good thing or not, but for once I find myself caring about such things in a plot, which is disturbing in itself. I suppose it does also mean I'd start watching *Eastenders* too if they worked in a zombie outbreak at some point, but then when wouldn't a film or TV show be drastically improved by the addition of zombies to some extent?

I agree. Sorry to slip in a bit of soap opera... but really, aren't all comics just soap operas for boys. It's all about relationships and human interaction if you look past the explosions, fighting and zombies... just admit it. "Oh, man... I sure do hope Peter and Mary Jane kiss this issue!" We're all girls.

Secondly, a slight grumble, sorry. Towards the end of the issue I found myself thinking "Oh, we're running out of pages, must be a cliffhanger soon. In the supermarket near Woodbury, I know a bunch of Woodbury guys will turn up." Unsurprisingly, over the page the same happens. Obviously I know why you employ such devices at the end of each issue, and I'm sure it makes a lot of sense. I just on occasion find them a little stilted; especially when they are quickly resolved and everything is 'reset' to default afterwards. Regardless, a very minor point on what is by far the best comic book going. It's not as if I expect you to stop doing it. I don't know, I just felt the need to point it out for some reason.

Well the intent is for them to not be stilted and I try not to quickly reset to default afterwards... I'll try to work harder at it. I think the "cliffhangers for the last few issues have been a bit of a change of pace... and I hope the one at the end of this issue came as at least a SMALL shock.

Anyway, keep up the excellent work. It is genuinely refreshing to have such an original, thrilling and intelligent work in any medium, but especially comics. Don't ever let the series stop.

Yours Sincerely,
Paul Hunting

I'll do my best to keep it up, as will Mistrs Adlard, Rathburn and Wooton. The best is yet to come!

And with that, I gotta wrap things up. The wife and I gotta watch Sex and the City dvds. (Research for an upcoming arc.)

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

As I type type this, my friend Mike Wieringo has been dead for three days.

I've sat here for almost an hour, typing and retying some bullshit text piece about what Mike meant to me and it just comes off like I'm sitting here trying to prove that I knew the guy. Mike and I had a lot of conversations over the last four years since I met him that I will always cherish. Mike was a great guy and I'm so goddamned pissed that I'll never get to talk to him or see a new piece of art from him that I'm really just not in the mood to do a letters column. I don't think he ever knew how much he meant to me or how much he meant to everyone.

I'll miss you, Mike.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Best issue ever, folks!

I like that Robert thought this was going to be poorly received, but if you come back in three weeks for Walking Dead Weekly 46, you'll see otherwise! At any rate, let's look at some vintage letters!

-Sina Grace

Well, here we are with issue 43.

Yeah, this is the flashback issue. I'm thinking I might get some complaints for this issue (and I'm prepared, fuckers! Bring it on!) but there is some very important stuff being touched on in the issue, stuff that will be used later in the series, that is important to show.

I chose to do this issue this way, instead of telling the governor's story along with the way as a subplot in the previous issues because that would pretty much kill any impact his attack on the prison would have.

I think it worked out, but I do understand that two issues in a row have ended at the exact same moment and that makes it seem like there's been no progression this issue... well, I promise it will be worth it in the long run.

Also, before anyone complains about the reused pages... this issue has the exact same amount of new pages as any other issue has. The reused pages are EXTRA. This issue is longer than usual issues.

Now—enough of that. Let's get some all answered.

Kirkman,

I felt really bad for Rick. He should be able to bask in the joy of his new baby girl, but he has to savour Dale's foot.

I thought this issue was going to be lighter in tone due to the baby's arrival, but this is one dark tale.

1. It looked like Dale was jealous over Andrea and Tyreese's interaction. Am I wrong?

You were right—and this has been pretty much resolved already.

2. When are you going to flesh out Axel's character? You, fo low me?

Soon, unless he dies.

On page 19 at the top, Tyreese has his shirt off, then in the last panel he has his shirt on. On page 20 Tyreese doesn't have his shirt on anymore. Is he really that indecisive on a hot day?

Yes, Charlie Adlard knows Tyreese inside and out, he knows what makes him tick, he knows when he wears a shirt and when he doesn't. Sometimes the change is quite sudden but that's just how Tyreese is.

Your upcoming issues' teaser "No One Is Safe" has me scared for Rick. This means that you're doing your job.

Sophia Uk

Thanks, lady... I'm trying.

Mr. Kirkman,

I appreciate you printing my letter in issue 39. I thought it might have delved into areas that were too deep to print, but I respect your allowing your readers to have the ignorance of some statements on the other side of the argument. My exact words were that I had more belief in the "possibility" of that among those sickos than what Charles L. attempted to pass off as the "honest truth" of a larger group of people in society. I imply out, his statement was nothing more than propaganda, and I wanted to say something equally shocking to counter it on a social level. I went through every stage of emotion in that letter. Perhaps the Middle Eastern reference was an ill-considered comparison for the point I was trying to make, but I won't apologize to anyone who took my statements the wrong way, because you took them the wrong way and have no need to be offended, just as I believe no black person should be

offended by what

happened to Michonne based simply on the color of her skin. Still, I wanted to set the record straight that I do have faith in my few law man and society, and I have nothing but hope for an end

to this sad affair known as racism because the word itself has started to mutate into areas that frankly do not apply to the definition

I admit freely that I am a "backwater redneck" of above-average intellect and deep philosophies that may go in some weird directions that need to change for the better of my understanding of my peers, and I don't claim to know or understand everything even on the subject of racism. Those are simply facts given my birthplace and upbringing that have shaped my attitude. I'm sure there are things I never will understand, but I consider one thing an ultimate truth: everyone is racist, and anyone who says they are not is lying either to themselves or to their peers. I come from a family background of long-standing racism, but I have fought my elder relatives to instill an opposing viewpoint that we are all equal as human beings regardless of constant reminders that some of us are of a particular skin color, nationality, or intelligence bracket. When I look at an individual, despite any nagging racism or preconceived notion in the back of my mind, that I fight off with a passion, I do my damndest to see only the good in that person no matter what they do, even if the person is a criminal or a comic book villain. I think your book, with its severe global disaster, is a good example of just how equal we all are as human beings and should be a testament of how all people can work together and relate on a colorless level. The fact that it's in black and white accentuates this, I think, but even that can't force some deep-seated people to be colorblind long enough to see the point. I try my best to advocate equality, but I'm only human and just as prone to mistakes in my opinions as anyone else. When people take those mistakes at more than face value and don't try to help one another understand rather than calling one another ignorant, then that is when the senseless screaming starts, and people forget that ignorance has a cure.

My point, in essence, was that Michonne gave me a completely opposite image compared to what she gave Charles L. and others who complained. I think Michonne's situation compares in terms of literature to The Color Purple. It is much more graphic and traumatic than the spousal abuse of the novel, but I believe that its ramifications carry a similar message of the strength of an oppressed person. I think those who come a red necked look only at the visual brutality of the act, and they may do well to look deeper. Acting on aesthetics alone seems to lead to the bleakest of arguments, and that is what we have here. Additionally, I agree with your rebuttal that reverse racism is subtle and not really an issue. I only wanted to state that it exists on the spectrum, and for the last several years I have seen a trend of black-on-black racism that tops it fairly easily. Case in point, the opinion among some that Barack Obama isn't really "black" because he isn't descended from slaves. We strive for equality, and yet we continue to create more labels to segregate ourselves even from our own groups.

On that note, I will fade back into the ether and return to my role as a spectator. I won't ever stop reading, but writing (on this subject at least) goes too far after I may drop a line for general kudos, but I'm leaving this subject alone from here on out. This argument and racism as a whole just need to die off. Maybe the lens need to land or the zombies need to rise up in this world so that we can work it out once and for all... or simply confuse the matter so much that no one even wants to touch it anymore (I think we're there already). Peace, to EVERY way possible for EVERY living being on the planet... may we reach that someday at the end of this rough road. Come on, people now. Smile on your brother, and all that 50s hippie crap. The words really do mean something once you get past the tone of the decade and all the psychedelic colors.

Sincerely,

Aaron Corway

Sorry if I misunderstood the meaning of what you said. I've given you a chance to say your piece here in print as an apology.

I was surprised that there was no expansion of the fact that Billy just ran and left. Dale being chewed on by the zombie. Dale was unconscious when Billy ran, but he must have remembered he was out there with the guy and wondered why he had to crawl away from the zombie himself and why wasn't Billy helping him or looking for him.

Drew Peabody

Billy ran out of fear—it all happened quickly. Dale doesn't hold it against him. Dale looks at Billy as a child, making a child's mistake.

First things first, I love this comic series! I really do! You're doing it in a very different way from the other comics: takes out there—you're allowing the story to be the main focal point, not the android. And that takes guts. And that's also what makes you different—and, in my opinion, better—from the rest!

It's easy to hack and slash (and that's important to have in a horror comic, uh, I mean, "Survival vs. Adventure"—btw, love the term!) but when you make the zombies the thing that drives the comic it gets old fast. But, I'm sure you know this already, why you haven't lost readership! I wish you guys all the success in the world and gratefully look forward to collecting the rest of this series for many years to come. It's an amazing comic!

That said, two things about this comic grate on me. (Hey, its constructive criticism... HA HA HA!) First, I've noticed that from time to time you've "recycled" images. You'll use the same drawing more than once on the page (sometimes with minor changes, like a smile added, or you'll put a hand on a shoulder for comfort,

or something like that. Sometimes, there will be no charge at all. And it sucks. It's lazy. You shouldn't do it. This comic kicks too much ass, to take such stupid liberties like that.

For example:

Issue #40, page 17, you use the same image twice, but with just the tiniest smile added

Issue 37, pg 8 you uses the exact same draw ng twice

Issue 6, page 10, you use the exact same image 3 times
And again - Issue #33, page 5 you use the same image of Michonne -- 3 TIMES

I get it that the character looks like the character, and all that, and sometimes you are trying to convey a certain mood or something, but don't be lazy. It's a real turn off when reading a comic. And people DO notice it. (I was chatting with some other WD fans online the other week and that was a common beef that a lot of people shared)

What you're referring to is commonly known as a "photo stat" or "stat" and we've done it just a smidge more often than the FOUR times you've noticed in **FOURTY** issues. It's a tool like any other, used to convey **LACK** of movement or change in a medium where there is **NO** MOVEMENT and it's not something I'll be stopping any time soon. They are scenes that are written in to the book as part of the story... not to save time, but to convey a certain action, or mood, or whatever. If Charlie were to draw the scene twice, aside from being frankly unnecessary, it would also ruin the moment, because there would be a change. Any time you've seen anyone frozen in a moment of a movie or television show, stunned, scared or otherwise and they just stay there, caught in the moment... that would be a stat in a comic.

Besides. . . novelists use the same words over and over and over in books. Why can't they just use new words? I'm right there with you, really... but those guys are just trying to cut corners.

Second, why are the guys and gals wasting ammo on tin cans for practice, when they could be sniping the zombies standing on the other side of the fence? The SP-AT of a zombie's skull exp nd ng is much more interesting than the PTING of a can falling over. I mean, why not thin the herd if you're just wasting ammo? Just a friendly suggestion. (That said, why aren't they doing shifts in the guard towers? I mean, if they know Woodbury is a threat, common sense says put sentries on duty to watch for the possibly invasion.)

Well, they must have thought the fences were their first line of defense, no need for sentries. And on the can thing, a can is a smaller, more narrow target, and would train people a little better. Later, they do go out to kill moving targets but shooting cans was a viable step toward that.

Anyway, like I said, I adore this comic, and hope it has a run for MANY, MANY YEARS!!! Just thought you might want to know what one of your b ggest fans is thinking. Take care and keep it interesting!

-Clay in Canada

In closing, stats are the coolest, my friend. I get a lot of pleasure spotting them in various books (they're in virtually every comic) and noting the complexity of some. It adds an extra level to the reading experience. I hope you see things my way from now on, Clay.

I would like to start out by telling you how much I enjoy your book. The other day I did a pay on line where I picked up that Marvel Zombie garbage and explained how much better your comic was. I put TWD dead right up there with Strangers in Paradise and Powers in how you pace the story (even when nothing "happens" there are still significant events) and keep all the participants relevant. All that good praise I feel like a dumb ass for a few minor issues (come on, rls), but here goes. Where are they geographically? I know they started out in Atlanta but other than Tyreese, his daughter, Michonne, the convicts at the prison, some residents of Woodbury, and the father and son in the first two issues where are the black people? You did show Atlanta was the new town but you didn't show that many black zombies. As a person of color I struggle with saying books that under represent us we have been a major part of this nation since its formation and have helped shape it in every way. That leads me to my 2nd issue (Don't get me wrong your book is still great) you seem to be feeding the stereotype of the black man as infatuation with white women (maybe unintentionally) With his relationship p with Michonne stalled will Tyreese now pursue Andrea? The final panels seemed to move toward that idea. I also don't want you to think I'm a youngster talking out off his ass as 40 of these issues I have dealt with and talk to my 16 yr old son and nephews about all the time. Thanks for another great issue and keep up the good work. P.S. Please do not at Marvel talk to you into any type of cross over. Don't Sell Out.

Christopher Crayton

What do you have against white women, Christopher? Anyway, as you can see by now, Tyreese is still very much with Michonne and he and Andrea are only friends... so no stereotypes being fed here. They are still in Georgia, but yeah... I guess we don't have enough black people. Sorry about that. I'll try to work some more in. Now, most of the residents in that area did go into the city of Atlanta and get turned into MORE zombies when the plane started... so our characters aren't exactly from the area, so I've got that to use in my defense.

Also... there are a lot of black characters in this book compared to most comic books. I don't think it's a good idea or very new as it has been as it's just a bad sign for other books. Anyway, more black characters... request noted and logged.

Hello Robert,

Issue #40 was a great read as usual. Things are looking to be shaken up real soon and I'm really looking forward to it!

In the letter's page of that issue, a few people had questions about how long in advance you have plotted the book. I do have a question about it. This might have been asked in a previous issue, so I apologize if I'm being redundant.

You said that the book is plotted a long ways out... do you ever find yourself stray ng a bit from your plans but then eventually y coming back on track? As an example, I remember reading that Jeff Smith had also plotted Bone n advance, but felt there were some things that needed to be addressed as he was going. One example was the Great Cow Race. He had no intention of showing it, until he realized he really should. Are there any instances like that in Walking Dead?

Yes, a few, but I can't mention some because they haven't happened yet. Dexter and Andrea were originally just going to leave the prison--and not try to kick everyone out. But when I was writing issue 18, I figured "these guys wouldn't just leave." So I had to change the ending. Originally, Hershel was going to lose a leg, not Allen, but I decided so much bad stuff had happened to Hershel already with losing his kids and all, having him then also lose a leg would seem unrealistic... like I had it out for the guy... so Allen's leg was lost. I also wasn't planning on killing Allen. I loved Allen, until the issue he died in was being written. It just seemed like it needed

the extra punch of him dying... and so he died. Seemed like a good idea at the time.

Also, when is freak n' www.kirkmanian.com pe live?717?

I'm tired of asking!
Roch Vallancourt

Soon... it's actually being worked on. I think **SOMETHING** will be live before the end of October for sure.

Wow I just finished Number #40! Awesome work. I enjoyed the story very much. It was a nice change of pace from the usual Boy meets zomb e. Zomb e bites boy storyline. I am really glad Dale is doing well and survived the bite, I like Dale and I hope the "old geezer" sticks around for a long while. I hope the Andrea sticks with him for the long haul. Looks like she is getting a bit friendly with that young whippersnapper Tyreese. It is just nice to see the characters have some happy times for a change.

Your writing has drawn me into the characters and their lives. I actually care about what happens to them, and that, K-man, is the mark of a great writer. Your characters are rich and full of life. I look forward to watching their lives evolve over the next 460 issues. I know at some point others will come into the scene while others just move on and I know they will all draw me in to their story.

And I just feel deep in my heart that you are going to have that crazy Governor show his ugly face again. He is going to be one screwed up looking dude for sure.

Look at you, all seeing the future and stuff.

Thanks for such a wonderful story line

And thanks for having Rick shave. Man, he was kind of skuzzy looking, dude. Lol.

Thank Charlie... he got sick of drawing facial hair

Hey, would be too much for a prosthetic. Dr. to show up at the prison so Dale can have a false leg? Or better yet, one of those pirate peg legs. How cool would that be?

Again with the future seeing... I'm impressed.

I just looked at the CSMore website. Says my Rick Grimes fighting a zombie statue won't ship until around November. That's sad. I was really looking forward to getting it this coming month. Oh, well. I'll be patient.

I understand there was a problem with the factory in China, but it's been resolved now... so it'll be in your hot little hands soon enough.

Keeping on creat ng your Worlds, Robert. You do good work

Now, if we can just get some solar powered video consoles at the prison for Carl...

I guess that is too much though

Take care
Michael Heffron
"I sit in awe of the K man and his worlds which he creates"

Thanks for writing Michael, and for the kind, flattering words.

Lord of Comics Kirkman,

First off I love your comic. No other in the entire world matches yours or in my opinion ever will. After that usual kasing up on to other thngs

What are you doing with Dale? Damn you he can't die. Those poor k ds have been through enough without another "father" dying. Or maybe since as told earlier it's not the actual bite that kills you and they have a doctor now... maybe she'll just clean the wound of bacteria and he'll survive! Right? Right?

For now at least...

Nice go on the similarities between the Governor and Rick. Makes the story a nice warning for. You know, if he's not careful or if it's family dies he could end up like that...

I have to say I've enjoyed Glenn and Maggie's storyline more than any other in the book. If you kill one of them so help me I'll...!!I drop the book okay that's a lie I d stay even if you killed everyone and just had zombies and aliens wandering around

That's good to know...

One question, why does Axel say "you lo love me" after almost everything he says? I'm not complaining, actually he's. I was just reading some back issues and noticed he says that a lot. On that note I love Axel, he should have some more page time but I'm sure you got that request a lot for all the characters. on second thought just keep doing what you're doing, don't change a thing.

That's just a little personality tick to give him a unique voice. He's like one of those guys who ends every sentence with "man." Or something like that.

I have to say after read ng some of the letters pages I have to ask why can't people tell the difference between the characters? It's not that hard. I think it's quite obvious if you actually pay attention to the book your reading

Look! I'm not commenting on Michonne's rape! shock! gasp!

You blew it.

Anyhoo, thanks for listening to my ramblings and keep up the good work!

Jessica R.

P.S. I'm a girl, so I'll get printed right? please? pretty please with a cherry on top? you can even edit out that part about allen if I am spoiling it or smethng...

I can't come out and say I print every letter from a girl... or else people will just start saying they're female to get printed... and we can't have that. I get enough people acting like ladies on the internet. I don't need it in my letters columns to.

Hey, Kirkman - Still loving the book! A little slow this time, but pacing is necessary now and then... I was surprised to see Dale survive the zombie bite after how Al ended. Great job writing up the final trial there. But I know how you hate hearing the same boring crap about how great you are, so I'll get on to some questions about the letters (see, some people really do read them!).

1. I'm really curious about this one. Why do you think washed out color would work

so well in a movie when you are so dedicated to keeping the book black and white? I'm not saying either is a bad idea, I'm just curious as to why you think the coloring should change in a different medium.

I doubt anyone would want to make a black and white movie. It's not often done and the only time, in recent memory, it's been successful is *Shindler's List*. I don't think you'll EVER see a straight black and white TV show. I also think washed out color just looks cool.

2. Did you print Valeria's letter get printed twice on purpose? It was a great letter and probably worthy of a second printing, especially since many people may have missed it in the previous and much longer letter... Just wondering if it was intentional or not

I think I printed it first, out of the order it came in to make sure it got printed... then accidentally forgot and printed it again because I'm a moron. I do these things late at night... never quiz me on letter column stuff... I'm usually in a sleep deprived stupor.

3. Not a question, but I thought it was interesting that I got into comics much the same way you did... I was a big baseball card collector as a kid. One day, my friends dragged me to a new store that had opened that so d cards and comics. I had read comics on and off before, but after a couple trips to the store, I started picking up more comics... I still go to the same store every week, but I can't remember the last time I bought a baseball card

I honestly don't know why I was collecting baseball cards... I didn't know who anyone was and I never really watched baseball. Comics were a much better fit. I'm happier.. aren't you?

Finally, bring back the Rathburn back covers! I miss them The poster looks great, but I still want to see some more of Cliff's artwork!

Cliff is busy working on the new BRIT series--he's penciling, inking and coloring it. So no time for back covers!

I didn't get issue 41 before issue 40. Your time machine must be broken

Breaking promises again... YOU STINK!

Jim Amato

You're right... I do stink. I'll go take a shower now.

Robert,

Issue 41 was kinda a let down man, don't get me wrong it was great having issue 41 only a week after issue 40, I just thought it was kind of a weak issue

My first comp a is not about Alice, how stupid do you have to be to want to study the zombies, I mean come on, what a stupid idea. Rick should have killed that thing the minute she brought it into the prison, what do you really need to know about them? I really hope she's dead zombie and is a prison hospital really set up to run test and shit like that? It's not like they have a laboratory in the prison, I really hope she dies soon, she is getting on my nerves.

There's any number of things she could have done to that zombie with equipment from any medical center that would have taught her something more about zombies. She has a scientific mind... she's very smart, and she wanted to learn more about the enemy.

Second I think you killed off Carol just a little too soon, she was just starting to get interesting, I would have loved to see some drama between her and Hershel. Sleep with my boy and you will burn in Hades, slut, type of shit happening, and it would have been kinda funny to see her on y talking to that zombie, spending all her time out there reading it stories and brushing its hair

Nah... it was time for her to die.

Don't get me wrong I not saying that I'm going to stop reading it or anything, I was just a little at down. All in all though, it just makes all the other issues that much better. Anyhow I do have a few questions I'm hoping you would take the time to answer

1) Will I ever see Dexter's buddy Andrew again?

Probably not. But you never know.

2) Any chance of having the group venture into a city again? I know it would be hard to find a reason to go, but it would be cool to see one again

Eventually, I'm sure.

3) I saw a picture of cover 41 online a while before it came out, and the background looked blue, when I picked up my issue it was purple, did Adlard change it, or were there 2 different covers? (It's probably my favorite cover yet)

It might just be your monitor. It's always been purple. Computers do that sometimes.

Thank you for a great series
Eric Porter

Thanks for ripping my heart out and stomping on it about issue 41... you jerk!

Kirkman,

WOW. I don't even know what to say. It was crazy enough to see 2 issues of Walking Dead's blue, when I picked up a mere week apart from each other. But that ending n. #41. WOW. Bill y was practical y raped by Carol, and then her new best friend gave her a nasty hickey. Guess Lori's going to have to live on her promise now then, eh?

Other than the insane events with Caro, these two issues were pretty quiet. Lots of subtle things though. That's what I really d go about this series. There doesn't have to be any action at all, because the character interactions are so strong. An entire issue of Rick and Tyrese playing poker would probably be just as good as any other issue.

I cannot wait for the upcoming "no one is safe" arc, and the impending battle with the Woodbury jerks. Kinda worried about who's going to die next, but that's half of the fun in reading *Walking Dead*. You just never know. I'm also counted about what's going on in *Invisible Man* in #50...that cover has me stumped down the week). Wolf-Man's great too, but the bimonth y schedule is killing me. While I'm rambling and raving about your books, I gotta add that I'm going to really miss Ant Man. Apparently he's going to appear in other series, but that's just not the same.

He's in good hands with Dan Slott over in *Avengers: The Initiative*. You'll like what he's doing.

A lot of people ask you what your favorite zombie movies are, so I'm going to ask something that I haven't seen asked in the letters pages (though I'm sure it has been...). What are some of your favorite bands and/or genres of music?

I guess that's everything for now. Keep on doing what you're doing, man!

-Dan O'Neill

I think I answered this before. Some favorites just off the top of my head? Nick Cave, Neil Young, David Bowie, Bog Segar, The White Stripes, Holly Golightly, The Presidents of the United States of America, The Strokes, AC/DC, Almine Mann, Tool, The Beatles... I'm sure there are others.

Mr. Kirkman,

Why the hell would Rick wear his high gun holster on his right hip? It's not like his stub is going to be winning any new gun duels.

I'll talk to Charlie about it. I'm not sure he could just reverse it, and it's not like he could buy a new one. I'm not an expert on holsters.

Thanks for killing Carol. Is it some sort of foreshadowing that the Zombie that killed her looks an awful lot like Lori? Poor Rick, if Lori dies his nipples are going to be SORE

??

I'm really enjoying the book lately. It's great to see a shake up coming up though, the survivors have spent enough time in that prison. Time to pack up the RV and head out to California

Kudos!

-Zach L

Sunshine!

Dear Kirkman,

The cover was lost on me; even after reading the issue itself it took me some time to figure out that there even was blood on Rick's face on the cover... I just thought it was a bad mug shot maybe "Everything is GREAT Now let's see how long it LASTS" The shorter the better for me really! The soap opera quality of the book is nothing really compared to actual violence and meeting the new characters from Woodbury. Believe it or not, I'm still memorizing characters names; I've had to remind you that the more you use character names the quicker it is to get to know them... but we've been through all that before. I think you may have accomplished something I've never seen before--two issues of the same series in the same week. Same Day, really. What is it about Image that issues have Always come out late? I've got this great thing you might wanna look into: it's called a Printing Press

You're right... we really should look into actually printing the books instead of conjuring them with magic. Good idea, Andrew. Also, the two issues shipped a week apart, not the same day.

I think there could be more T&A, I people still use that term, here, sure. And breast-feeding doesn't count. Another thing I noticed this issue. Besides Lori all the other women have either blonde or red hair, freckles and a ponytail (or are they all the same person?), this makes it a little hard to tell people apart. Oh, and I hate ponytails. I think ponytails went out with actual Ponys

Yeah, you don't see a lot of pony's around these days... I think they're extinct.

Does Rick's prison population really have anything to worry about with the Woodbury gang? Unless they're flying in somehow, they'll have zombies to deal with first, right? Now that I think about it, I think the prison staff may be the worst thing of this series. It makes things too safe, ya know? If there was just a small gang of LAMTS in a van against the world--that might be a bit better. What state is all this taking place in, right now anyway? Are they close to Washington D.C.? Do they know what's happening there? What IS happening there? Well, I gotta go, more TWD to read

Sincerely,

Andrew J Shaw

They're in Georgia.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

I think you kind of brushed off Martin Casanova in the letters column this ish; don't know if you've noticed, but there are more foreign-based people in American comics now than ever, and more and more all the time (I know that cause I can't pronounce the names!)... and 600 people for a graphic novel presentation sounds okay to me.

I didn't mean to sound like I blew him off. Sometimes I read a letter and I just don't get the urge to respond to specific things, inspiration doesn't hit, but still, it seems like a readable, interesting letter... so I print it. I guess it could be taken as me blowing him off. As I recall, I remember the letters column for 41 seeming a bit dull as far as my responses went. I was having an off day.

I personally am not a fan of so-called zombies, really. Zombes aren't the greatest conversationists for one thing; but they can be scary! Ever wonder why they move so slow, Kirkman? Maybe it's a circulation thing. I found your explanation of how a zombie is created to be a little vague, Carol, we hardly knew ya. She actually hadn't appeared in a while anyway I don't think guess you got tired of her. Course a cliffhanger is a cliffhanger, and she hasn't even turned zombie yet, right? There should be a better word than just zomb, don'tcha think? TWD's maybe? Hey--I got a nickname! At least accord'g to Rev. Occulus's letter this ish

Sincerely,

Godboy Andrew J Shaw

PS Good issue once again

I thought a double shot of Andrew Shaw to wrap up this letters column would pack a bit more punch... you've let me down, Godboy. Try harder next issue.

And with that, I bring things to a close. I think this issue is shipping about five weeks after 42, so we slipped a week, but we'll try and make that up on 44. Things are moving along nicely, right? RIGHT?!

See you all again very soon,

-Robert Kirkman.

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Welcome!

Here it is! The Governor's vicious attacks against our survivors! But these letters have nothing to do with that!

- Sina Grace

Here we are at issue 44. This one kicks off the whole "NO ONE IS SAFE" arc of the book that'll be bringing us through issue 48. Big stuff is planned. The book will be drastically different here in a few months, you watch.

That's about all I want to say on the matter, other than get ready for the shit to hit the fan (much more than it already has).

Now let's answer some mail!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Well this will be my second letter I have written, the last one was a tad more serious, about the whole michonne thing... this one is to say YOU SUCK!!!!!! Let me reiterate YOU F*CKING SUCK!!!!!! Do you have any idea how you ruin peoples lives? I have been an avid reader since TWD issue #1...which may I say is a gateway drug.... At first I thought I could control it....but quickly became an addict....you really should put a warning label for that... but now, god, now I am worse....and do you know why Mr. Kirkman....well I will tell you with one word INVINCIBLE!!!!

Wait... did you send this to the wrong address?

I used to be such a beautiful 28 year old woman, cute face and a great figure, I had friends, I had fun, I had a better relationship....now, well now I have bags under my eyes from laying in bed wondering what happens, I have turned into a comic book dork (I mean hell I even have a reserve box), and my boyfriend is sick of seeing me dress up as Atom Eve in the bedroom ... I get the shakes and sweats....I have lost more weight....I know my dealer by his first name and I call him.... regularly!

You created this monster I have become.....and you need to fix it.....well you and that walker fellow... I had no idea this would happen when I picked up the first trade.... but then I rushed back to my dealer and pulled trades 2-8 off the shelf like it was crack....at first my dealer just made fun of me....until I called the next day for more More MORE!!!!!!

Then he threatened to cut me off, and recommended that they might have treatment for this... well guess what they don't.... so now I have one more comic to pick up....but it is still not enough I already have to wait patiently for each walking dead issue, but now this has just put me over the edge....I should be spending hundreds of dollars on new shoes or clothes like every other normal female....but no instead I buy hundreds and hundreds of dollars on the likes of you ..

I think people like you and Ellis, Bendis, and Brubaker, Ennis, and the whole lot of you should be ashamed at what a mess you make of peoples lives....not to mention the fact that the artists (Adlard, Ottley, Crabtree, Rathburn, and lets not forget Mr.Wooton) need to be slapped for being so damn good..... You have all helped make me a junkie and I think at the very least I deserve an apology..... and I pray to god that you never stop writing more.....I don't think I would know what to do, I don't think I could make it again on the outside....

So yeah thanks for the freaking amazing storylines, keep em coming!!!!

Sincerely,

Karith Cashion

So... I don't suppose there's any way I could talk you into trying THE ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN or the new BRIT series, is there? Heh.

Y'know, I wasn't going to print this letter because it's not really about THE WALKING DEAD... but y'know, you all really should be reading INVINCIBLE, THE ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN and BRIT--that is, if you can stand superheroes at all.

Yeah, I guess you probably do get tired of email after email telling you how great you are. It sure seems like a real love fest between you and your fans. I can't even get my Mother to say nice things about me

I really don't... please--keep it coming.

If it makes you feel better, I don't think you're so hot. I mean, you're ok and all. I do dig The Walking Dead and a few of your other books on a monthly basis. Battle Pope was really a swell idea. Anyway, the point of my letter is to let you know that The Walking Dead has really been dragging as of late. Nothing has really been going on much at all. Something needs to happen. I don't think I can take another issue of the gang just hanging out and looking cool. I mean, send them out exploring or something. Let them find a new town or a new group of people. The last 3 or 4 issues have been pretty much just a big bundle of fluff. Your stories always seem to move a little slower than most comics, but enough is enough. I love the book, but it needs to start moving forward.

Thanks for your time,
Jeffrey Gibson

Well, things ARE picking up, I hope, starting this issue.

That said, I don't think this book moves slower than most comics just because a super-villain isn't busting through a wall every eight pages. While it might be lacking in action, this is a book about normal characters and I think the things that have been happening in the book have been important to the overall arc of the characters. That said, like I said before--things are picking up now.

Hello

I've come to interrupt your regularly broadcasted sausage-fest to NOT talk about Michonne's rape, racism, and how apparently being an atheist is wrong in a comic book about lost morals and dead people eating living people. I mean, seriously boys, stop whining! I want to first thank you for finally having Carol snap. While I have come to care about these characters probably a little bit more than is considered healthy, Carol needed to go. She was a loose cannon and nobody else was making any moves toward complete insanity, so kudos. Though I hardly need to congratulate you on writing awesome story arcs, it seems to be one of the things you do best. I can't really describe what it's like, as a fan of your work, to be waiting in agony to see if a two dimensional apparition delivers a healthy baby, or survives a non-existent bite to the leg. I'm sure my boyfriend would be afraid for my own mental health if he wasn't also completely roped in.

I am currently an illustration major who's trying to focus in sequential art and that who-ha, and while I'm not sure if I'll end up writing comics, storyboards, being a world renowned chef or joining the circus, it's nice to have something to look at that gives me an air of confidence. I don't get a lot of support for my own work at home, while my skill is not in question, I think I just scare my parents with the idea that I like drawing flesh eating zombies

and silly, but often vulgar pictures. I'm not twisted, I don't wear raccoon eye makeup and feign despair; I'm a happy chick, I just have a flare for the demented. Have you encountered this problem, or is it a lost daddy's little girl thing only? I don't expect you to hold the answer as if you're Yoda himself, but hell, you'd have a better perspective than me at this point. I usually hate writing letters like this, essentially a fan letter, but from your responses to other letters, you seem like a stand up guy.

Yeah, I'm totally awesome. And also yeah, I think it's a girl thing.

I guess the only other thing I wanted to say was I felt an air of Day of the Dead in issue 41, and that rules. Whether it was intended or not, it certainly wasn't cheesy, as your work is consistently tasteful (given the genre). You're going places, mister! The best of luck to you!

Erin Leary

Well, Day is my favorite Romero movie--and zombie movie, so yeah... can't really help it if some things seep in. It wasn't intentional.

P.S. If you haven't seen Hot Fuzz, you should

Seen it, loved it, bought the DVD and will soon buy the bigger more expensive DVD for the extras because I am a sucker.

Just read issue 41, NICE. Ever since I finished the issue, I've been thinking about the way the story unfolded. I finally decided to just go ahead and send in my question. As I witnessed Carol's, in essence, downward spiral I immediately thought she was going to kill herself. When I finished the issue, I initially thought you had tipped your hand too much and almost gave away the fact that she was finally going all the way off the deep end. The foreshadowing of her setting up with Lori, arranging for her daughter's care, and her last fuck all seemed to eagerly point to her preparing to die. As I reflected more though (My mind tends to wander at work) I recalled that I was still very tense as I saw her walking towards the captured zombie, and still shocked as she let the zombie bite her. The *Method* was enough of a jolt to shake me from the comfort of knowing her death was coming.

Now I'm stuck in kind of a rut wondering if you had intended to lead us along realizing what she was planning to do; still being shocked and disgusted by the irrationality and bizarreness of the manner in which she chooses to commit suicide. On the other hand, as I mentioned before, it just might have been an instance of over foreshadowing, intending us to merely feel that something just wasn't right (of course you'd probably never admit to it :D). I'd be interested in understanding the process you were going through writing this series of events.

Regardless, this book is my favorite of the books I'm currently reading. It's one of the only things keeping me interested in an industry I feel has become stagnant with never ending, unevolving, cliched super hero books.

So, until the "Zombie Season" on LOST, or Rick and the gang become stranded on a mystical island, keep up the awesome work,

John

Well, I wasn't so much trying to telegraph that she was about to commit suicide as much as I was just showing her tying up the loose ends... I wanted people to see that something was not quite right with her (as it has been for some time) and I was actually trying to give a bit of a sense, with her talk with Lori, that things were getting back to normal between them (or close to it). If you did see it coming, I'm glad the method, at the very least, was a bit of a shock.

Dear Mr "took my writing a letter to a comic virginity and never printed it" Kirkman,

You bastard God damn you. Why did you have to go and say that you listen to the Dirty Three. Truly one of the best bands on the planet Now I cannot stay angry at you as you obviously have got great tastes and also I suppose because your writing is just so bloody good

Just came back from holidays and after picking up my standing order was nicely surprised to have issues #39 to #41 sitting there waiting for me to read And boy they didn't disappoint.

In issue #40 where Rick turns back to Lori just hacking Dallas foot and goes "this world , this fucking world" and Lori still centered on the baby just looks at him and then looking happy says "think we should name her Judith" was absolutely brilliant

Such warmth and humour after such a brutal scene was pure gold.

I see Rick is still on a bit of a power trip. Takes over from Alice (basically pushing her out of the way) and hacks Dales foot off and then in #41 decides he will kill the groups "pet zombie" His, I know what is best for everyone and I will do it attitude is starting to remind me of Shane I still love the guy and know he's been through a lot and has every one's best interests at heart but hey they made a committee and he isn't and doesn't have to be the leader and solely responsible for everything. Maybe running on testosterone and stupidity as he says. Maybe the new baby will chill him out a bit.

I think Dale is tripping that Andrea is looking to move on. Sure she said some things when he came to but not seriously. But you never know with you Kirkman, you sly devil. Let's hope that Tyreese can keep it in his pants if she makes a play.

A couple of letters (in issue #39 and #41) asked about using names more. You explained, quite logically, in #39 that would not be natural every time one person talked to another that they say their name. Excluding the now 5 young kids, there's only 13 (I think) main characters, 12 after that lovely ending to poor deluded Carol. Charlie's facial details of the characters is so much better than it used to be and after 4 years of reading I find it surprising that you would need a name supplied as to know who the character is. But I only collect TWD and 2 other comics (Usagi and The Goon) so maybe if you get a lot more comics every month it is harder. Don't know but just wanted to add my piece and ask not to be too over flooded with names.

I'm with you, but I will be trying to drop names in where it is natural... maybe a bit more often than before. \ Hopefully it won't be too noticeable.

Any special plans when issue #50 done? The missus cooking you your favourite meal, taking you out for a bit of a pub crawl or anything like that?

Just writing issue 51 and keeping the run going.

Congrats on the new addition to the Kirkman clan and for breaking into the top 100 and thank you and all the team for such an enjoyable read every month. Hoping to see this in print.

A fan for life
Joel Boyes

New addition? My son is a year and a half old now! Thanks though... but he'd be offended by being called "new."

Even if you don't print this please respond.

I just got the mailer today with WD issue #40. Love it. But I also received the Ultimate Spider man 100 Project.

It was a great compilation of artwork that did include some of Arthur's work from Marvel zombies. I was a bit disappointed because I didn't see any of Charlie's work in there and to top it off there were several covers by the same artists. A few of them looked rushed as well. I have only come to one conclusion. You bastard... you worked poor Charlie to death and he wasn't able to participate with this fantastic project by the hero initiative. I hope you sleep well on your pile of money. I'm bipolar so that being said, keep cranking them out ASAP. We can't get enough.

Later Cap'n Rob.
Chris Deluna

I think it's as simple as Charlie just wasn't asked. Charlie's always doing side projects here and there and always asking me for more script--so trust me, I'm not working him too hard.

Dear Kirkman,

This is the first letter I ever wrote to a comic book letter page, But for this series I think it's about time I do, Walking Dead is the best comic book I read in a long time it's like watching a good tv drama you always want to know what will happen next. I also enjoy Invincible it would be cool if you do a Invincible and walking dead crossover just for the hell of it but that's up to you.

Sincerely,
Mason Miller

A crossover? I'm sorry--but there will NEVER be a crossover between The Walking Dead--and a superhero book.

That is a very true statement, that the Roamers are slow as all

hell, but when you are thinking they are not a threat, then you're deader than a door nail. Well, it wasn't put exactly that way in your story, but these survivors need to always be aware of their surroundings.

Great advice to watch the zombies patterns and how they move about. This is good leadership advice. I was completely shocked at Carol, she is truly crazy as all hell to confront that zombie. The bite out of her neck, left me gagging.

Paul Dale Roberts

Good... gagging is good. Glad to see I got a reaction from you.

Robert,

First off I just want to say congratulations for releasing consecutive issues of The Walking Dead in a two week span! When I saw Diamond had listed #41 for the following week after #40 was just released I believed it had to be a mistake and would be corrected the following Monday. But surprise, surprise, come Wednesday #41 was pulled for me. Hopefully a steady monthly schedule isn't too far behind because, recently, my interest has waned in standard super hero fare and my pull-list has taken a hit as a result. I've only been reading comics for a few years and mature, character driven titles such as The Walking Dead, along with any comic written by Ed Brubaker, are all that are left to maintain my interest in the hobby.

So after #41's astonishing ending, where does The Walking Dead go from here? A lot of the loose ends have been tied up in the last two issues with only one noticeable new one being created. Glen and Maggie got married, Lori's baby was born apparently healthy, Dale survived the zombie bite, and Carol finally..

Aside, the looming attack by the residents of Woodbury and Dale's fear of losing Andrea, any hints as to where were heading next?

That looming attack was a big one...

I can't remember the last issue it was in but the character profile pages have been missing for quite some time! You said you removed them so they can be updated.. Are they ever coming back?

They're very time consuming to put together and there's a bunch of new characters to list and I haven't had time. Eventually... I hope... but for now I just don't have time.

Don't disappoint me and end The Walking Dead anytime soon! I'm looking forward to a second omnibus shortly after the release of issue #48 and countless others after that. Also, there is only one way to do The Walking Dead series justice if it was ever to be made into a movie or television series; An HBO ongoing series! If done right that would be absolutely astounding.

Keep up the amazing work,
Mike Somma

I don't plan on ending this book any time remotely soon. So don't worry. The second Omnibus will be released with summer 2008 or before Christmas 2008, it'll have 25-48. I'm still deciding on when it will be out--but it will be out.

Hello again, Kirkman. Another week, another TWD... Let's keep this pace up, okay? I need more zombie goodness every week! Seriously though, thanks for pointing out that you're only 5 issues behind after 4 years

That's really not bad nowadays. I wouldn't even notice if you didn't mention it in the lettercol just about every month... :-)

Well, I don't mention it as much as letter writers mention it. I'm not going to apologize for it any more, I think we've shipped more issues in our time than any other independent book in recent memory. 7 TPB volumes in 4 years is pretty damn good, I think.

Another fine issue here. Carol is one messed up broad! I don't think I ever realized quite how deranged she really is... I didn't expect her to try to off herself again so soon, although I did think you telegraphed it a few pages earlier when she asked Lori if she'd take care of Sophia. I can't believe Lori let her just walk away at that point... How could she not know something like this was coming? It doesn't look like there's any hope of saving her now, but

I thought that with Dale too... I'm interested to see if you find a plausible way of saving Carol now.

Keep in mind this isn't normal every day life we're talking about. Every one of these characters expect to die at some point--the odds are against them.

It's not odd at all for Carol to ask Lori to take care of Sophia if she dies. People are dropping like flies around them. I don't think Lori would give it a second thought.

Sorry to hear about Ant Man being cancelled... I didn't even know it was ending until I read it in your letters page... That was a fun book. Sorry to see it go so soon...

Uh... before it's time, maybe? Who knows. Books come and go. If none of my series had ever ended I'd be writing fifty books right now or never would have been able to start something new (or I would have had to--gasp--quit a book).

I'm glad to see you're finally putting your racial arguments to rest in the letters page and moving on to your extreme hatred of religion instead

HAHA

Progress at its finest! Maybe the name of Letter Hacks should be changed to Kirkman's Political Forum. :-)

I agree with your view though. Organized religion is all well and good, but none for me, thanks

So, issue 50 is going to be a major turning point, eh? Is this when the aliens finally come to wipe out the zombie menace? I've been looking forward to that for far too long..

No aliens in 50... maybe issue 75.

Out of curiosity, how far in advance does Charlie draw the covers for TWD?

Well, he drew the covers for 44-48 before he started issue 43... so a bit.

I noticed that Rick still has his stubble on this cover and on the cover for issue 42. Doesn't Charlie know he's drawing a clean shaven Rick on the interiors?!! And speaking of Charlie, that reminds me - I have to go tell him to make me a zombie just like he did Jeff J!

Jim Amato

Well, the cover to 42 was drawn well in advance of the issue, usually 4 or maybe even 5 months before the issue is started. So they'll rarely be completely accurate. The job of a cover is to sell the book, though... not show you exactly what's inside, per se. Hell, half the time I use the covers to deliberately LIE to readers so they won't see what's coming. I mean, you wouldn't want a surprise given away on the cover--would you?

I don't care if this makes it to letter hacks or not but I demand vindication!

I recently purchased a handful of THE WALKING DEAD and it's the best goddamn comic I've read in ages... kudos! However, upon closer inspection of issue 27 April 2006, the first 8 pages are frigin repeated so in reality I have 16 pages of the same story with absolutely no closure and to top it off I have 6 repeated pages of letter hacks! (that could be 6 more pages of this awesome storyline but what can ya do) maybe this is the rare find of the century, either way it does me no good its a crucial part of the story and I have no closure, I need closure. I will gladly send it back for a new copy or perhaps a nice TPB :)

I believe the reader/writer relationship has been breached due to a faulty product and I expect at least confirmation that u have read and thought about my grievance.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration

If you send your copy of issue 27 to my brand spanking new P.O. Box I'll gladly mail you a replacement copy. And that goes for ANYONE with any kind of book that has such a printing error. Just include a note telling me what's what. What you've got here is a rare printing error that occurs all the time... it's just one of those things in the printing business.

Mr. Kirkman,

I finally tracked down some early issues of Invincible and took your letter column suggestions to heart. 1) Keep the praise to a minimum, 2) number questions and keep them relevant for letter-column readers, and 3) sign a name. I wanted to ask if those suggestions still stand, and if there's anything you would add.

Don't complain about that rape business or any perceived racial or religious bias... but that's not a hard and fast rule.

It seems like you've paced these last couple issues as a [relative] calm before the storm before all hell breaks loose with the revenge of the Woodburians (can't wait to see what happens there). I've enjoyed watching the characters develop and the small shockers like Dale getting bit in parallel with Lori's birth, and Carol offering herself first to Billy and then to the pet-zombie... a despairingly narcissistic yet martyr-like sacrifice. And then I laughed, because Carol getting bit at the end of 41 was also a very Sally Field moment.... "you DO like me!"

Groan.

A few questions:

1) Where was Michonne in this issue? Talking to the voices again?

Taking a nap? It's a big prison.

2) The cover to 40 lost me. What is Rick splattered with blood and mouth agape about? Dale? And what is that open gash on his nose from? Just his old scar? I wonder if that's one problem with soliciting covers so far in advance...

Well, that was the exact same moment after he cut off Dale's leg--so the cover worked, it was one of the more literal covers. And yes, Rick still has the scar from his fight with Tyreese.

3) The cover to 41, however, was brilliant, because whenever it was solicited months ago I wondered... aw snap does Lori die in childbirth and become a zombie!? But it's not Lori, it's zombie Barbie. I think you've done that sort of teaser with a lot of the covers and it's great. 27 is my favorite (the zombie reflections in the not gear helmet), but it was too much to buy over at splashpageart.com and you know... doesn't look good in the living room with the Rodin theme and all.

Thanks? And... you should have bought that cover.

4) Where can I find me a SUPA CRIB like Glenn and Maggie? I need more Walking Dead merchandise.

Available at Wal-Marts everywhere.

Thanks for the ever-great reads,
-Brian Hans

Thanks for the letter.

Back a few months ago when issue 34 came out, and I got to the double page spread of the prison overrun with zombies, I actually said out loud while reading the book, "Holy shit!"

And at the time I thought to myself, "That's a damn good comic right there." I mean, you expect people to do that kind of thing on occasion in the movies or to a TV show. You're hearing the characters on the screen speak to you, so it's only natural that when something shocking happens you would have some sort of oral outburst. But that a comic, words and pictures on a page, could elicit a verbal response from me while I'm reading is a testament to its powerful storytelling.

And with issue 41, you did it again

I reached the final few pages, with Carol talking to the zombie, and I was thinking to myself, "wow, she is all kinds of messed up, isn't she?" and then I turned the page. And I exclaimed "oh what the fuck!"

So there's a kudo for you: "Walking Dead: making more readers swear out loud than any other comic currently published!"

I look forward to the next foul-language-inducing issue.

Steve Higgins

I hope to be able to pull this off again at some point in the future. We'll see.

Hey, Kirkman, thanks for printing my other letter a few issues back about ish 35.

I have a new and serious question for you, which I'm surprised no one has brought up yet.

Rick lost his right hand. Adlard keeps drawing him with his gun still slung on his right hip. How is a man supposed to draw and fire his sidearm without his hand?

True he could 'reach around', (insert your own prison joke) but this would be time consuming and deadly if needed his gun in a hurry

Logically, he should wear his sidearm in a cross draw rig, or should switch it to his left side so he can draw it with his left hand. Or at the very least, turn the holster around so that the butt is out for his left hand to grab onto. Maybe there is a shoulder holster in the armory.

Thanks for doing a super job.
Jerry Dickson.

Well, I don't know that there's a lot of quick draw action going on with Rick. I mean, right now, in the prison at least, there's not zombies jumping out from around corners--he knows when he might need to use a gun--so he can have it drawn in advance. Also, it slows things down a second or two, but really, reaching over to your other side isn't that hard.

True, the gun is backwards that way, but it would be backwards if he just spun the belt around to the other side too--and there's not a ton of gun belts lying around right now--so--he's kind of stuck with it right now.

Hello, Sir!

It is extremely exciting that you actually read through these fan letters and reply to them yourselves. Hell, I typically read what you write to people and decide based on that if I want to read what other people wrote. Let me get the kissing up out of the way because, sir, this comic/graphic novel/story is AMAZING! I love it. I am actually not even a comic reader...I have a strong interest in comic art and have collected a few comic #1 issues when that was all the craze (right when Spawn came out). Not to mention whole series of comic cards like Marvel's first three sets and it's Masterpiece series. But, I was much younger then and that was many years ago. So, last week I strolled into a comic book store with an avid reader of comics and saw your book. Being a huge fan of the zombie genre, I've heard people throw the name "The Walking Dead" around and knew I had to give it a read...well, I'm glad I did and it's almost sad that I have now caught up to your four long years of work. I even have the hardcovers coming in soon (book three - preordered).

Book three will be out soon.

Tony Moore's artwork from the beginning was amazing and since I got a late start in the series and was reading #6 and #7 back to back it was almost hard for me to accept the way Mr. Adlard was drawing the characters (especially Rick/Lori). But, I can definitely say that I love everything he has done and his art has been the perfect compliment to your amazing writing and story telling skills. That Mr. Rathburn guy...he's not too shabby either.

Well, he's a little shabby... but only on weekends.

Mr Rathburn is actually a huge part of why I'm writing to guys (you know, besides the fact that you guys and "The Walking Dead" are completely awesome). I love Rathburn's back cover art. His zombies are very fun to look over and intriguing at the same time. I tried to Google somewhere I could buy posters featuring his zombie artwork, but...no luck. I am definitely going to go out and pick up the poster you've been advertising in the book, but what about a giant, wide print featuring all those zombies Mr. Rathburn's been gracing us with on the back cover. Due to my late start, I know I've missed quite a few, but hopefully a full sized poster would fix that nicely. Hmmm...is it sick that I want to hang a poster of rotting corpses on my wall?

Not sick at all--I'll definitely think about it.

Mr. Kirkman, sir, thank you for your time reading this. What happened to your site, www.robertkirkman.com that funkontron points to? Also, I do dabble in some webdesign/graphic stuff... Maybe I can throw up an unofficial (or official?) fan page for you guys. I'm not so sure why I don't see many out there. Maybe they get lost in the Google searches. I just hope it'd be ok to use the images/covers for the page.

My site will actually be going live before the end of the year for sure... maybe much, much sooner!

Thanks again -- I don't write many fan letters (or any?) and I definitely have not written to a comic before! Hoping and anxious to hear a response.

Respectfully,
Chris Kuntz

You should write more often.

Hey, Kirkman, I know I just sent you email yesterday about Rick's hand / handgun, but I forgot to add another observation.

First off, good fake out on the front cover of 41. I thought for sure that the Zombie was supposed to be Rick's wife, and that she died of complications after the birth...the zombie does look like her, same type of clothes, and hair...

Not to critique too much, but on the back of the issue the page that says "Next issue The time has come"..... whoops.... Dale has his LEG BACK and is standing. Obviously this was drawn in advance of the writing.

(Also, I know it is because she is in the foreground, but it looks like Andrea is grabbing Hershel's groin...especially cause the look and his face!)

Sorry to pick out the small stuff...just trying to keep it real. You guys are great...keep up the good work.

Jerry Dickson.

That cover was done in advance of the issue, and more importantly it was SEEN by the public before the issue where Dale lost his leg came out. So to people who saw that cover--things would be spoiled if he had a peg leg or was on crutches or whatever. So yeah, he's got a full leg there--but it's not a mistake, it's that way so we don't give things away. Also, there are TPB readers who see the covers to the singles issues months before they read the TPBs, so I try to keep the covers as spoiler free as possible. It's all part of the plan.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I've read all of TWD and it is one of the best ongoing series being published today in any medium.

The narrative turns that this book has taken (especially during the Safe Behind Bars arc and the Woodbury excursion) have been gut wrenchingly marvelous. I had to literally put the book down during the rape scene because I needed a break from the horror that had filed me.

As much as I love your book I have two comments (rather than criticisms)

1) Even though I love the realistic black/white artwork of Adlard (so much so that I have--hanging in my apartment--an original page of Charlie's from TWD) lately I've been having a hard time keeping track of the growing cast of characters. Everyone, and I'm sorry for even thinking this...and if you totally disagree, please, say so and help me see it your way... everyone seems to look more and more similar. Sometimes I read a page and I think to myself, "Who is that?"

I understand that we're not dealing with iconic supermen and women...these are regular people...and I can't praise TWD team enough for depicting everyday people in your comic with versatility...and I would totally be okay with it if you responded, "Charlie and I decided that in order to comment on the facelessness of the zombies we would slowly breakdown distinctions between the 'human' cast." But, seriously I don't think that's the case at all. Is it me? I know you're not the voice of the readership but am I the only one having this problem? Do you even think it's a problem?

Is it a problem for SOME people? Yeah... but you know what, there's really not a lot that can be done at this point. The characters DO look very different--VERY different. If I lined up headshots of all the characters you would see that they are very unique looking people and easy to tell apart... but sometimes, in the context of the story, I guess it can get a little confusing. All I can say is that the number of characters in the book will be getting cut back a bit over the next few months--maybe it won't be a problem then.

Here is my second comment

2) There was a point earlier in the book when Rick had a talk with the guy on the farm about the zombies. It was a beautiful moment in the book. Perhaps the grandest when, for the first time, we, as readers, saw that people within the world of TWD, did not all see the zombies in the same way. I think the man said something like, "They're not monsters. That is my son in there!" It was such a powerful moment that I smiled uncontrollably and I knew--at that very moment--that your world...our world, since every month you share it with me--had blossomed

I miss those moments. Let me tell you why.

Lately your writing has focused on moments of characterization (perhaps to head off my first comment at the pass). These one page vignettes haven't really been working for me. I use the word "vignettes" because they often depict either two people isolated somewhere in the prison or, if these depicted moments

occur in public they're spoken in (what I imagine are) hushed tones. I think the reason that I haven't really been feeling them is because they're too short. The overarching narrative to the book is plodding and methodical--much like the biters and roamers themselves but the brevity of the short vignettes is too much of contrast, I think.

The effect the conversation Rick had on the farm has yet to be duplicated in such a packed and concise way. (except maybe when one of the arcs finished with the twist reading of your title.) Instead, you and your team have duplicated the effect in more of a sustained manner (namely the group moving into the prison and the discovery and escape from

Woodbury) and that is, perhaps, even more impressive. But, I can't help but miss those moments of thoughtfulness at the Otherness that your book has seemed to pass up lately in order so that the characters can become more familiar to us.

I guess what I'm still trying to gauge is, what is at the core of your book? I read it as a realistic metaphor not realism with touches of metaphor. How do you, and the other members of the team, view your book?

Yours truly,
Steffan DelPiano

Well, uh... I view it as a continuing tale of human suffering. Well, it will be short scenes and long scenes. Things will speed up and slow down, but in the end it will be a chronicle of years of suffering endured by a group of (hopefully) realistic characters who have grown and changed over time. That's the plan at least. There will be more scenes like the one you mentioned, I promise. There's a lot of life left in this book, yet.

You Sexy Bastards

I just had to tell you that your level of awesomeness went way up when you mentioned Passions in your last letter hacks. I turned that show on one day in college, my roommate and I were like "midgets, hell fires in the closet, witches and blind preists- its gotta be good." It's pretty much how I felt about your comic when I saw it. Goodness

My boyfriend got the bite training for his second tour in Iraq and passed away this summer. He could only take with him what fit in his footlocker and I thought you guys might like to know several of your comics were in it. They got passed around the base. You remain a hit both among the living and dead. In your line of work that has to be the highest form of flattery.

Thanks a lot I love all your comics. Especially the Pope kicking ass and taking names.
Brandy

Brandy, I'm a little dumfounded here... I gotta say. I'm glad you liked Passions and I don't know about you--but I was sorry to see it cancelled. Now, are you also telling me that your boyfriend died in Iraq and was buried with The Walking Dead? Or are you saying "passed away" has another meaning and he's not dead--just enjoying the book and passing it around the military base.

I don't know... I'm a bit confused. Seems a very casual way to mention a dead boyfriend. If he did die, I'm very sorry for your loss... if he didn't die... man, you sure do lead me to believe he did. I just don't know what to say other than...

Glad you liked Battle Pope!

And there you go--another end to another letters column.

I hope to see you all back here next month.

See you then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Howdy Walking Dead Weekly Readers,

Current Editor Sina Grace here, inviting you to another serving of fan mail from yesteryear (or so).

And that was issue 45... I hope you all liked it.

Okay, short letters column this month--the holidays are on the way an I'm trying to get these books out ASAP. I hope you understand.

Now, let's move onto the mail.

Hi Robert,

Another good issue. I was just wondering what ever happened to creating a character guide to print every month in the back of the book promised in a letter column many, many issues back? It would be helpful to have a reminder about who everyone is. It would make the stories even impactful, seeing as how I sometimes forgot how everyone is related to each other. Please consider it or I will have Ant Man cancelled. I have that power.

Kid Kaos

Well, thanks for cancelling Ant-Man... you'd think that'd give me more time to put together a new character guide--but sadly, it hasn't worked out. I'll see what I can do about getting one in the next issue or so... it's just a matter of having the time to do it, really.

Hello Mister Kirkman,

It's been a while since I last wrote to The Walking Dead. However I have kept up with every issue that has come out. This is still by far my favorite comic. Even when I was between jobs and had to make cuts to what I could and could not do. Walking Dead was the only comic I made sure I still got every month. It's that good.

Thank you very much--I really appreciate the support.

I have to say the end of issue 42 left my jaw hanging to the floor. All I could say was, "Holly shit!"

If this had been a TV series I could see this being the major cliff hanger at the end of a season. Leaving everyone wonder what the hell was going to happen until the next seasons started. Good thing this is a monthly comic. I would hate waiting all summer long to see where this is going next.

Great writing, great stories, great comic.... That is until the aliens arrive. Then I'll have to rethink everything.

Eric L. Busby

Glad you dug it. I hope you enjoyed seeing the EXACT SAME cliffhanger in issue 43 also, heh.

Dear Mr. Kirkinator,

I enjoy reading TWD due to the fact I love zombie anything. The story is amazing, as well as the art. I just have a problem with something. Rick's hand. I'm tired of seeing him bummed out about his stump, "Ohh, I can't play basketball anymore, boohoo. I have a useless stump where there once was a five fingered, useful appendage." I give me a break.

Have you ever lost a hand? Give the guy a break.

I think Rick needs to take after a certain well known someone with a ass kicking replacement for a missing hand. I am of course talking about Ash from The Evil Dead series. Now before I get flak about this let me explain. I know a chainsaw would be unrealistic due to the fact there is a shortage of gas (even after the raid on the National Guard Station, it would be a waste), and a robotic hand like the one from Army of Darkness would be out of the question due to the fact Rick could never be as crafty as The King.

So, let's look at what we have to work with. In earlier issues, Rick seemed to wield a hatchet nicely, so hatchet hand? Eh, maybe. I think he would still have the swinging power, as long as they can't get it fastened on there good enough. Groovy? I think so.

Even more outlandish? How about Captain Hook style? Nah, you would have to go through the eye socket with the pointy end and that could be tricky to get out, plus Rick would have to find I pirate uniform to actually look cool.

One of the best ways I think he could go is a bludgeoning weapon. I know they don't have any Medieval maces or spiked balls, but some type of viking-like stone mallet, something with weight that can crush a skull or knock something outta the way. A hammer head would be too small (oversized hammer would look ridiculous)

What about a bladed stump? That would be wicked, long but not too long. If the riot gear could be modified to cover all of his stump a small blade would be decent due to the fact the suits are bite proof. I still say a long blade, but I'm sure Mac wont want to give up her katana.

A lawn mower like from Dead Alive would be too big, plus I don't think they have one. Actually, looking back on that, how the hell would he put that one his hand?

We can even talk about non-combat attachments! Anyone need a bottle opener, can opener, file, toothpick?!? Swiss Army Knife Rick, the ultimate handy man.

Rick needs to capitalize on this so called loss. I'm tired of looking at his plain stump and seeing so much potential. Maybe after it heals up a little more, Rick will start thinking straight and turn into a steel appendaged undead killing bad ass. I still love him though, even though he only has one hand. This would totally take away his feelings of uselessness and sad feelings about his "loss"

In all seriousness, I do believe something should be done with Rick's stump. Whatever you do, keep the TWD coming.

PS. Hail to the king baby.

Just to give you guys a little insight into my creative process--just to pull the curtain aside a bit--this IS something I've put a LOT of thought into. You see--The Walking Dead is a serious book. I think that's a very important part of its success. Aside from the zombies walking around and a few things I've fudged here and there--most of the things that happen in this book COULD happen in real life. It's "grounded" in reality at least for the most part.

So yeah, chainsaw hand--totally stupid.

BUT, thinking logically... were I in the situation Rick is in... with the one hand and all, at least in a battle situation (like the one we're kind of in now) I'd want to have something there. And realistically it could be done. If he duct taped a butcher knife to his forearm--that could totally work and it could be used for stabbing and cutting. He'd need to have a belt or two on there to hold it on--and a shit load of tape--and it wouldn't last long after being used a few times... but he could get a few good kills in as long as it was fastened well enough.

So I was totally going to put a knife on his arm--at least temporarily from time to time. I even discussed this with my good friend Ed (famous) Brubaker. He suggested a sledge hammer instead, because of the long handle that could be used as a counter weight but I think that would be too heavy--it'd slow him down and keep him off balance.

But anyway--even though him doing this would be logical, and slightly realistic... it would LOOK a bit silly and I'd never hear the end of Evil Dead comparisons which frankly, I'm already sick of (despite how much I love those movies).

So in the end, I decided against it. So (for now at least) he's just going to have a stump... until I change my mind.

Wow.

Suicide by zombie? That's got to be a first, right?

And the saddest part is, it really makes sense for Carol's character, after all the situations she's gone through before.

Wow. Just. . . wow.

Sean Landry

Uh... technically that dude at the end of Day of the Dead beat me to it... but he was a bit more crazy and really fucked things up for everyone else with his suicide. So Carol's was different. But still... Romero (as always) was blazing the trail.

Hey Kirkman,

The latest Walking Dead- shut my mouth. I had written before saying that it didn't seem feasible for Woodbury to attack (not with all the obstacles in their path) but I never considered that they would be so mobile. I was not so surprised to see the Governor alive because I thought you left something on the table after Michonne exacted her revenge by not feeding him to his daughter. That is his daughter, right?

That remains to be confirmed.

The trick now is to see if the Governor is so hell bent on revenge that he would overrun the prison and the fences, compromising the defense that they offer or attack more judiciously. I think the choice has to be made. Does the Governor still want the prison so his people can live there or does he want to kill Rick's lot as quick and painfully as possible? Just thinking ahead.

I loved the movie 28 Days Later but it really stepped up a notch when the Army became as real a monster as the infected (though I am sure there is much debate over that premise). It showed that in 'end times' like this it is not so black-and-white as to who you need to be the most wary of. People (I'm talking about your readers now) have become so complacent with the idea of civilized society that they would most likely assume that in the event of such a crisis all the living would band together, that those that are left would want to carry on with the same prior morality as much as possible. That may not be the case. The Woodbury storyline drove that point home well. And if you look back, you can see that in Rick's character except either Rick has a layer of humanity OR we have been along for the ride with Rick for so long that we tend to give him the benefit of the doubt.

And now that the Governor and Woodbury thread is continuing it appears as if the bloodthirsty readership will be sated. Though I like the more day-to-day stuff this aspect needs to rear its ugly head. Sometime, somewhere we knew it had to get ugly.

Lastly, congratulations on getting back on schedule. I have a slight idea of the effort that must have taken. Most readers probably do not realize all that's involved in putting out a full comic each month, but if they could they would see that a number of things have to fall together. I assume that the larger companies are able to do so because they have more 'lackeys' to do the 'dirty jobs' than a smaller group as y'all.

Again, my condolences for your loss,
Dawson

Well, yeah... the schedule is difficult... that's why most independent books are worse off than we are. But y'know... it's part of the job, so we do our best.

Dear Robert,

I am an Italian guy who happened to be in the US for some time and ended hooked up by your Art. I love US and I love The Walking Dead. Now that I am back to Italy I can hardly wait for TWD trades every six months or so. I have been following the online forum and read there all the spoilers before getting the seventh trade, so I think I know almost everything that happened so far.

Zombies are the monsters I like the most, because they can be everyone: your friends, your relatives, the people you love, and even yourself if you let your guard down. But the scariest thing is what people can do to others after an apocalypse like this. TWD is the best Art on zombies since a long time.

Some questions about the series (I don't read the monthly books, just the trades, so I don't know if these questions have already been asked. If so, just disregard them)

1. We know just few things about the characters before the zombie storm (except for Rick). Maybe you could show flashbacks about each one of them, so that we could see what they were doing when the zombies hit the news and started to scratch their front door, up to the point we found them in your books. Pretty much like in the first season of the TV series LOST, where they showed each protagonist's story right before the plane crash. And this could work also for showing the story of the Governor and his people. Is this already planned to be shown? If not, can be?

Well, we did a flashback issue... but there's no plans to do regular flashbacks for all the characters. It's just not interesting to me. I want to see where they go--not where they've been.

2. Talking about this, why did you choose to skip the description of the zombie outbreak by starting the story one month after, when Rick wakes up alone in a hospital? The same happened in the movie "28 days later" and I guess that was a choice based on budget (it is expensive to show a civilization crumbling down)... but in a graphic novel you don't have budget limits! You can blow up as many cities as you want! So, what was your reason?

My reasoning was that. We've already seen that a billion times in a billion movies and other stuff. I wanted to get to what people haven't done very much... the long term effects... show what happens next. That's the idea behind this book. I try not to do anything that's been done in anything else.

3. Have you planned to let people use the radio? I guess batteries are available in a prison, and if not, they have the radios in the cars. Maybe some military radio station is still broadcasting. It would be cool to have hints about the big picture: If there is still a Government and an Army and safe zones somewhere. Will be any of that any time soon?

Stay tuned. I've wanted to keep things pretty contained up to this point--focused on Rick and the rest. We'll see where we go from here.

4. There is a growing interest in zombies lately, especially in the US and the UK. In the theaters there are now, or are planned to be, many zombie or zombie-like projects (Resident Evil: Extinction, 28 weeks later, Rodriguez's Planet Terror, Day of the Dead's remake). In the bookstores, other than your series, I can't forget "World War Z"... Why this revival now? Do you think there might be any connection with the war that US and UK are spearheading (more than every other Countries) also in their homelands?

Fear and unrest breeds stories about the end of the world... so there you go.

Thanks for the big time you give me with these books. I can't stop reading them over and over.

Best regards,
Roberto Dandi

Thanks for writing.

Hi guys,

Just wanted to do a follow up on that last letter- I had said I was disappointed in the lack of fallout from the group after Carol's suicide attempt, but I said that wrong. Obviously there was a HUGE initial fallout, with Rick and Tyrese nearly killing each other, what I meant is that I was disappointed in the lack of follow up with how Tyrese and Carol were acting around each other after what happened.

Shana Cuddy, Boston

Sorry if I misunderstood. Maybe I did drop the ball on that a little... but they just didn't interact much after that.

Mr. Kirkman,

We've hit issue 42 and the Wife and I are still here, reading each new copy with zeal. Do you realize just how big TWD has become? It's all over any Amazon zombie search, not to mention the rest of the web. Hell, at Christmas my brother asked me if we were reading, wanting to make sure we didn't miss out. TWD is quickly seating itself into pop culture. I think that's a tremendous feat for a book not published by the big two. More importantly, in a world currently overwhelmed by zombie fiction (comics, movies, paperbacks) yours stands out as a gem.

Yay!

Quickly, enough with the racist rants and the crying about rape. Ok. Come on peeps, it's a comic, not reality. We're dealing with a survivalist situation that is going to bring out the best in some folks and the worst in others. It's that simple. Allow me to use Katrina as an example. Some people helped others, giving them food, shelter, or getting them to safety. Many other people robbed, looted, and preyed on those they say as weak. It's human nature, IMHO, that when it comes to survival that most of us will show who we really are. I think in this fashion TWD reflects reality fairly close. This is one brutal world. Limbs are coming off willy nilly, people are killing each other for sport,

and all folks can focus on is one rape? I just don't get it. Is the rape terrible? Sure it is, but so is Dale's loss of half his leg or Rick's hand. I don't see tons of folks writing in about how Kirkman must hate whites. Perhaps it's time to move on.

You want to talk about fucked up? Lets us talk about Carol allowing the captive roamer to bite her. Now that's fucked up! Having a romp in the sack with Billy, probably giving him God knows what kind of nightmares, is a serious twist of the knife, ya know? Strange enough, I'm sad to see Carol go. She added some serious drama to the story.

It was cool to see Rick and Lori's baby born in the prison. New life in a dead world. I have thoughts that Alice is more than a convenient plot addition for the birth. I'm thinking there's drama to come with Alice. I'm also waiting to see if Hershel's faith, a faith that seems a little too over the top, leads to trouble at some point. Now Glen and Maggie are trying to conceive, I don't know but I doubt it will end with a smile.

I have been eager, for months mind you, for the Woodbury attack. Finally! At last they attack and what do I get? Another damn cliff hanger! You are an evil man Mr. Kirkman. Very evil. I'd actually thought about the zombies around the prison and cannot wait to see how they work in the attack. Then again the Woodbury group has a tank. A frikin' tank!

The world is full of dead people, limbs are flying, some are giving up, and now the only other living people our gang has found in all this time are going to attack them! I say bring it on.

Thanks for keeping us on the edge of our seats.
Chad and Venessa Caylor

You tell them Chad and Venessa!

Dear Robert,

I was referred to your book by Daryl, the Owner, of Collection Corner in Burlington NJ. It took me a while to get caught up as I started with issue 11, bought the trades, had a tough time finding issue 28 & 29 which I missed. However, I just finished Issue # 45 and loved every minute of it. Finally, caught up, this is truly a great read.

My first comic was Daredevil # 18 so I have been reading since before Peter saw M.J. I have the entire X men run but they seem to have gotten very convoluted. I have been spoiled by Miller, Moore, Bendis and now you. I have always been a zombie fan. In fact one of my greatest memories is seeing Night of the Living Dead with Freaks on Halloween at Oklahoma State University back in 1974. This has been such a refreshing book. Thank you for creating such a terrific story and I wish you continued success. I am penning a letter to Invincible as well. Thanks in advance for printing my letter. Go Pokes!

Warm Regards,
Martin Bizay

Hmm... I just printed a letter in Invincible about Daryl, the owner of Collection Corner in Burlington, NJ recommending my books. I really should send this guy a Christmas card or something. Oh, wait... you wrote that letter too... I guess it's just YOU, Martin.

That's it for now, kids. Be sure to be back here very soon for the senses-shattering issue 46!

Until then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hello Roamers,

It's hard to re-read the death of Tyreese. RIP, dude.

- Sina Grace

First of all, sorry for the delay. The holidays crept up on me and pretty much wrecked my ability to get this book out. As I type this, Charlie is working on 48, so we should catch up in fairly short order. Things are moving along nicely for us to have an issue-filled 2008, so don't worry... this will just be another small hiccup along the way, hopefully the last.

Second, so long Tyreese, huh?

Tyreese has been one of my favorite characters in the book for a long time. I'm just as sorry to see him go as, I'm sure, a lot of you reading this are. Now, in the past, I've been raked over the coals any time I do anything to a minority character. It's not fair, and we've discussed it to death in this letters column, so I'd just as soon not have to deal with it in the letters column for the next six months.

While some deaths in this series are very spur of the moment actions that I try not to think through (because it makes things more spontaneous, like real life) Tyreese's death has been planned almost since his introduction. It's always been something I've known about and have been working toward. It will have great impact on the series and well, frankly... nobody lives forever in this book.

Nobody.

So these things will continue to happen for the duration of the series. Characters have to die... that's just how the book works. So while I will miss Tyreese, I have the luxury of knowing what's ahead for the rest of the crew in this book, and so I know things will be okay.

So, uh... don't flip out.

Now, let's answer a bit of that mail.

Hey Kirkman,

All right, first things first: I'm a fan of Walking Dead. I dig it a lot, and I hope you keep putting it out for years yet to come. (You can feel the 'but' coming, can't you?)

Bring it on!

But here's the thing. Lately, your pacing really, really blows, and for me, issue 43 was really the last straw. Dude, you can't keep throwing cliffhangers at us then just not addressing them for a month. That's what I call self-indulgence and wasted opportunity.

What really gets me is that you *know* that shit is gonna piss us off, because you asked for our patience at the start of the letters page. Well, I got news for you, man. You gotta earn our patience. 'Cause mine is all used up after issue after issue that goes nowhere, even as you try to build up an imminent threat. You go on to say that everything that takes place is important later.

Well shit man, why not tell us later then? Do a flashback or something when it's relevant. Don't interrupt your momentum to

give us some bullshit background that, by your own admission, we don't need to know yet. That's lazy writing man.

Well, that's basically what I did. The important stuff from 43 that would be important "later" was important starting in 43. I didn't slow down the momentum of 36-42 by showing you the stuff in 43... instead, I saved it for a flashback.

The story has pretty much all but ground to a standstill for now. And that is downright amazing, considering you have a bunch of guys and a tank sitting outside the prison at the moment.

Yeah, it builds tension, right?! Right?!

So pick up the fuckin' pace man! If you keep on doing these tangents that overwhelm the main narrative, you're going to move into the realm of literary masturbation. I mean, for god's sake, Rick & Co. have been at the prison for more than two years of real time, and not enough is happening, even regarding (the initially excellent) character development.

Actually, Rick and company haven't been at the prison very long at all, not even a year. Lori was pregnant when Rick showed up and she gave birth nine months later, in issue 39. So they've only been here 7 months or so. A lot has happened to them in 7 months.

Anyways, I love this comic a lot. You've managed to single-handedly make zombies cool again, and the cast you've put together is second to none, I think. Don't squander what you and Charlie have worked so hard to put together, as even your most ardent fans grow impatient with glacial pacing! You deserve better dude.

Best,
Ben B

Well, starting with issue 49, things will be a whole heck of a lot faster. I'm taking my time with this Woodbury battle... it's probably the most important thing to happen in the book to date... but after that's over... it's full steam ahead.

Dear Captain Kirk(man)

Why the heck are you apologizing? The flashback issue was a great change of pace, insightful and refreshing. The governor is the consummate scumbag politician (reminds me of a guy named Alnibal), and in a few ways he is a dark doppelganger to Rick.

I was not shocked at all by his appearance last issue, because some of our fighting men in Iraq have sustained worse injuries in the battlefield, and his "death" lacked the seal of finality of everything else we've seen before.

V Rosario Fermalint
San Juan

Glad you liked it. I too was pretty surprised when I saw so many people were under the impression The Governor was dead. I didn't even mean to imply that.

Mr. Kirkman

I have to say the Governor is truly one of the sickest most vile, evil pieces of scum characters I have ever read. I love

him. Just when I thought you couldn't take him any further with raping and beating of Michonne, the live zombie feeding in a gladiator pit, severed zombie heads in fish tanks as entertainment, etc. You take him to another level not only do you have him survive Michonne's attack but you have him molest his zombie daughter that is just fucking sick where that hell did you come up with that idea,.... you know what never mind I might not want to know the answer to that. Thank you for such a great comic book I have been with you from day one and I just about love every issue. I never wrote before but after reading #43 I had to say something. You have truly taken zombies stories to another level. You are truly a superman among insects. Keep up the impeccable work

James

Yeah, the zombie kiss... eh. I was just trying to think of the worst things The Governor could ever do. The Governor is the worst case scenario for what living in this world does to people. I want him to be the most extreme case.

Mr. Kirkman,

OK... after many "close calls" I'm finally writing my first ever letter to a comic book.

Congratulations, sir, you've popped my comicbook fan-letter cherry.

I've been a fan of THE WALKING DEAD since the very first issue (in fact, I remember running all over town trying to find a store that actually ordered the first issue after I heard about it) and now, finally, I've come to the point where there's a question I just can't wait to have answered.

What was the deal with the Governor before the zombie epidemic?

Based on what we know of his character, I'm guessing that he wasn't necessarily Governor before all this started and that he somehow used the disaster to insert himself (no creepy pun intended) in a position of power... Is that the case? What the hell is the back story on this evil piece o' crap?

If we're going to learn more about his past later I'll gladly accept a "wait and see" answer... but if not, how about some insight into this evil prick? I mean, really, what the Hell is the deal with this guy?

Well, I really would like to show some of his past, just to give people a little more insight into his character. But I don't know if I should. The jury's still out on that one. Only time will tell.

Oh... one more thing. I've been raving about this book to my sweet lady for a while now and she recently asked me "Do the zombies digest the food they've eaten? If not, how can they keep eating? What happens to it?"

So... does the food somehow get dissolved and absorbed into their bodies... or not to put too fine a point on it, do zombies poop?

Whatever the answer (or answers), keep up the good work, sir! I'm in for the long haul!

SINcerely,
Dirk Manning

Do zombies poop? Well, I'd think not. There's a few options here. In Marvel Zombies I stated the zombies had a powerful stomach acid that dissolved all the flesh they ate. A friend of mine, Mark Kidwell, hypothesized that zombies would just eat and eat until their stomach's burst. And that zombies would be walking around with gaping holes where there stomachs would be. I don't know the science behind it all, but maybe zombies do continually "evacuate" like recently dead people do. Obviously their digestive track doesn't work... they're dead... but maybe flesh and guts can just pass on through, all the way to the logical conclusion (pooping, kids). Now, I don't picture a zombie stopping and squatting or anything like that... but maybe they're soiling themselves as they shamle along.

Okay... that was fun.

Dear Cap'n Kirkman,

So now we're doing issues without the cast entirely? I guess it

was okay, though; I just don't understand about the little zombie girl—she is dead, right? I don't have much to say other than that.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Thanks for writing anyway, Andrew. Always a pleasure.

Hello,

I really enjoy the book and have finally caught up through the trades enough to read new issues. I enjoy the realistic conversations and the overall believable tone of the series. You're the main reason I began paying attention to the names of writers on my comics. I began looking for other things you were writing and ironically enough realized I was already reading half of them. I began to read invincible through trades while still getting (but not yet reading) Invincible and related books. You have become one of my favorite writers and a great inspiration for me as a wannabe writer.

I enjoy the way the characters in WD have passed on. Some deaths truly disappointed me but only because I felt I knew the characters. At no point while reading this book have I questioned one thing that has transpired or thought of any plot point as a creative mistake. I find no flaws in this book. I was sickened when Lori cheated on Rick, I was shocked when Carol died, I was sympathetic when Michonne was raped and I had to turn away (and had to read it again for sheer shock value) when the Governor was tortured. If Dale had died I would have been heart broken. To take characters and make them part of a reader's life takes talent. Needless to say, you are talented.

I work in a comic book store in Gastonia, NC and have talked a few people into getting your other books but unfortunately, Walking Dead remains my solo adventure. In a way it makes me feel like the book is written specifically for me. I feel like I'm the survivor no one sees or hears. This book is written in such a way that it takes us to a place where even in a world filled with zombies, we can relate to the characters. That's what I love about Walking Dead.

I also enjoy the long letter column. However, I was wondering why letter columns are never collected in trades. I have never heard an explanation for this, I was wondering if perhaps you knew.

The letters columns are kind of dated, I think... and they'd take up a ton of damn room in the TPBs making them bigger and more expensive. I doubt that would be worth it in the long run.

Although, I do love money... so if anything thinks they'd order a TPB of just the letters columns let me know. If I hear from a ton of you—I'll do it. But... I'll feel really silly and ashamed, just so you know.

I enjoy your work, and I am a truly grateful fan. You and a video game called Dead Rising are responsible for my love of zombies (I don't like many other Horror movies besides zombie related ones). I hope to one day be able to write comics and you serve as a great example of what a writer should be.

May the Dead keep Walking,
Adam Davis

Well, thanks so much for all the kind words of praise, Adam. I wish you the best of luck with breaking in as a writer. It's quite tough.

I got Dead Rising for my X-Box but I've never played it. I look forward to one day having the time. I hear it's awesome.

Kirkman,

I didn't discover Walking Dead until around Issue 28 or so. A friend introduced me via the trade paperbacks and, since then, I've been hooked! At the end of each issue I can't wait for next month to get here so I can read the next chapter.

At the end of Issue 43 you said you were prepared for complaints. Well, I'm here to surprise you. While reading the issue I was expecting to see the scene with the Governor and his crew approaching the prison about midway through, and the last half would be the assault on our friends that reside there. After finishing the issue, I have to admit, I was a bit disappointed. Not because it was a bad read, but because I'm twice as excited as I

ever have been about the next issue and I still have to wait thirty days for it to get to me! I think you chose a great way to tell this story. The flashback issue was an excellent idea. To hell with all the naysayers. The only bad thing about this issue is waiting for the next issue.

Walking Dead is one of the greatest comics out there right now.

I don't care if this letter gets printed or not. I just wanted you and everyone else involved to know that you are doing an amazing job with this book. It's the one I most look forward to every month. Even with all the heroes and mutants running around in the comic world, I say Make Mine Zombies!

Brandon

Well, much to my surprise, response to issue 43 seems to be largely positive. I'll try and do more all flashback issues to slow down the pacing from here on out. Thanks!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I was tuned into The Walking Dead a little over a year ago by a friend who lent me the first TPB and I have been a loyal reader since then.

I have been like a kid in a candy store with each new issue due to the rich character development, the realistic portrayals of human conflict and suffering during extreme events and the obvious care that you, Charlie and Cliff show for these characters month after month.

Issue 43 was not one to disappoint.

While there was a pang of "loss" for not getting to see in this issue the Governor's assault on the prison, I was nonetheless gratified by this story. The extra delay in seeing the assault will make the inevitable conflict all the more immediate and intimate when it finally happens, primarily because of the length of time readers like myself have spent emotionally invested in these characters. We don't want to see bad things happen to the people/characters we like, but as we've learned all throughout this great story: no one is truly golden. EVERYONE SUFFERS.

Issue 44 will bring us readers to a place we've been dreading since these wonderful and tragic characters showed up at the prison. They will face a threat far greater than any zombie horde. They will face their own living kind. They won't be facing traumatized, yet rational human beings. They will be attacked by people who have been living at the razor's edge for weeks on end, who are driven by fear, death and suffering. At the head of this vanguard of destruction is a maniacal monster whom his followers fear and in a twisted way, love and trust.

Thus, my belief that you were right to tell more of the Governor's story now, in one issue.

In issue 43 we've received a further glimpse into the depths of this man's very sad existence. I appreciate being able to see how the villain in a story thinks, and see the kind of loyalty and passion (and ultimately, fear) he can inspire in his followers. I like to see where the depravity lies and how many moral boundaries are sacrificed with each passing look at the villain. The sequence of the Governor plucking out the zombie girl's teeth in order to kiss her was perfectly disturbing and, I hope, a foreshadowing of the bizarreness to come at the prison.

The most intriguing part of 43 was the minor Bob character. He's pressed into healing and caring for the mutilated Governor and in so doing is forced to come out his own alcoholic stupor to deal with what could best be described as a nightmare reality, but reality nonetheless. The body posture and facial expression of Bob in the last 2 panels of page 20 is great because to me it appears that he's totally unsure of what he's gotten himself into by saving this man's life. In a way it seems to be a grim acceptance of the situation, while at the same time some measure of awe. By rights the Governor was basically a dead man, but this drunk with practically zero medical experience somehow was able to "resurrect" him and in so doing inadvertently unleashed a demon.

One thing I'd like to point out, is that it wasn't that Bob was such a good medic that suddenly came out of nowhere that saved Governor's life--although he certainly did save his life. The idea is that Michonne was keeping The Governor alive... so she could torture him more. His wounds were bad, but not impossible to heal from.

I wonder if Bob has a larger role to play down the line, or if I'm

off base and he'll settle back into the background where he came from? I can't wait to find out!

Thank you Mr. Kirkman for being true to your characters and their story.

Sincerely,
Corey Sauer

You may in fact see Bob again soon. Stay tuned.

Kirkman;

Damn, man! I almost puked when I saw that "kiss scene" in issue # 43! What the f#&k were you thinking about?? You're sick, you know? Charlie, he's sick too! And Cliff...!

Anyway, keep up the good work. I love this book!

(Shit! Does it mean I am as sick as you...?)

J. I. del Val

I was thinking of ways to make you puke, J.I. I'll obviously have to try harder next time.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I just want to start off saying how much this comic rocks. I'm a huge horror/zombie fanatic and just got hooked on this comic 2 years ago, when I went out looking for some good zombie slash horror comic, but all I found was cheesy ones. That was until a friend recommended me to The Walking Dead. I started at issue #24 and was instantly hooked and went out and bought all issues up to date.

I think the thing that got me hooked was the fact that The Walking Dead was a never ending zombie story. The characters were full of emotion and personality, the artwork was amazing and full of detail while the storylines and subplots were nail biting and addictive to read on. Still, I have not up to this date, found a comic book as worthy as this one. I just want to give you a big Kudos to and everyone who works with you.

Thanks!

Now to the comic book, I have a few comments and questions for you...

1) Good job on the ending on Issue #42, I was getting tired of seeing the gang in the prison waiting until someone got bitten by a zombie unexpectedly. So when I turned the page to see the Governor back in action my jaw was to the floor and I was so anxious to see the next issue. I just want to beg you to be merciful on all of the characters because at this point I don't want to see anybody leave the comic or turn into a zombie, well except for Patricia.

You're a bit out of luck on that one. Patricia is the only one who survives!

2) Just wanted to thank you for killing off Carol. Just curious, why did you make Carol the one who does all the weird crazy things? I mean never had I read or seen anything with a character whom tried to kill herself, was so alone she asked to be with a married couple, went into hiding for about a dozen issues, then sleep with someone 20 years younger, then actually successfully kill herself.

Well, I just wanted to show how stressful life in this book actually is and how crazy it can make weaker people. Carol was a pretty weak, dependant person. Things wouldn't work out for people like her in this world.

3) I just don't understand how the people in Woodbury not understand how the Governor isn't a bad guy or at least be suspicious of him. I mean, do they just go and watch the zombie fights and see strangers fighting Zombies and never see them again. Aren't they curious of where all these people are coming from or why they never see them again?

Most of the zombie fights are staged... remember when the two guys fought afterward because the fight was too real? Most of the time two guys get in there and fake fighting surrounded by the zombies. People getting bit was few and far between.

4) I think you should elaborate more on how people can turn into zombies without one biting you, or how this whole mess started in the first place. Was it like a plague or a rapture kind of thing?

Well, that starts to get into the origin of all this stuff, and I think that's unimportant to the series itself. There will be smaller answers as things progress... but never will we see the whole picture.

5) I why do you still keep the comic in black&white? I mean, if I had to pick whether it could be in color or black and white, I would totally choose color. Not just for the fact of whether I can tell if tyreese is black or white (yeah I had to skip over all the racist crap in previous back letters) but it would be a hundred times more appealing to read if it was in color.

I disagree. I prefer it in black and white. The covers have enough color for me. I think black and white sets the perfect mood for the series.

To end this off I just want to say again this comic is amazing and one of the best zombie tales in the business. Also, I am looking forward to seeing Rick, his family and friends in many issues to come and keep up the nail biting stories.

Sincerely,
Brooke Kennedy (yes, girls actually read this comic!)

Yay! Girls!

Dear Mr Kirkman,

Big fan from across the pond, Scotland to be exact but that's enough about me this is about you. I've got a few questions that I have to ask my apologies but these aren't about TWD there about other projects of yours. The walking dead is perfect! well almost I have a request not a question about TWD

1) I know you don't like to put zombies of real people in your creation but I think you should make an exception for one man. The legend himself (no not Todd Macfarlane) but the grand daddy of zombie horror Mr George A. Romero come on! He deserves it. The man is a god, pay homage to the man who started it all come on!

George has already appeared as a zombie no less than three times in this series. I can't believe nobody's noticed.

2) Any insider info on the Haunt project with the great Todd MacFarlane (Spawn's my number one Image comic TWD is a close second, sorry)?

I just got a mess of pages from the artist on the series today. The first issue should be out this summer look for it!!

3) Finally Marvel Zombies 2, I have only read the first issue and by the time you read this and maybe print it (hint hint) the series will be finished and time may have answered my question but where is Captain America ? I know the Red Skull yanked out his brain but he can't be really dead. This is Cap were talking about. Marvel my have killed him off in the aftermath of civil war but come on! Keep him alive somewhere by alive I really mean alive-ish.

See the end of issue 3.

Thanks for reading,
Stewart McNaught

P.S. zombie Macfarlane and Romero COME ON !

I'll see what I can do.

To the crew behind the best title ever:

I have been a fan of zombie movies for eleven to twelve years, and sadly on heard about your series about three months ago. The manager (Matt) at Atomic Comics loved your work, and when I happened to come across the trades he was putting on display, I asked him about the series. He told me that I needed to immediately pick up the first trade, and in the end if I absolutely hated it, then he would buy it from me. I listened and picked up the first trade. I finished reading it in less than two hours that night. I HAD to know what came next. I went first thing the next morning and found the first two hardcovers on the shelf. I bought both, as well as the next two trades and all of the remaining issues that had yet to be collected.

Two days before Issue 44 came out, I had re-read the entire series for the SIXTH time. I have never read a series from start

to finish as many times before this. I have to say that I am not a fan of black and white art.... but, I wouldn't take this book any other way. There has yet to be a point that I thought was dull. I noticed that Jeffrey Gibson wrote in about how slow the book was becoming, and I disagree with him.

Yeah! Right on!

I feel like the book would have suffered if you made them go out on adventures instead of preparing themselves for what was coming, as well as trying to live their lives and retain some sanity. Sure the book would have moved a little faster, but considering the world they are living in, I know that I would rather take things easy, and save my strength. You never know when the group would need me and my hammer. (And yes, I would use a hammer.)

Now, I do have some questions:

1) Do you think you will ever cover the origin? Maybe in a one shot/ flash-back kind of deal?

You know, never say never. If sales were to plummet and I needed to pay my bills, I can't say I wouldn't do "THE WALKING DEAD: ORIGIN" but I really have no plans to. It's just not important to the story.

2) When the battle is resolved, assuming the Governor lives, will you explain what that creepy kiss was about with his daughter? It looked like he would have slipped her the tongue if Bob wasn't in the room.

There's really not much to explain, the Governor is a fucked up dude.

3) Recently I picked up and watched "Land of the Dead", and I was wondering if Romero had gotten his idea for the "biter" fights from you or was it just a coincidence?

It technically did appear in his flick first... but I figured the execution was different enough that I'd just move ahead as planned. This was something that was planned before the first issue shipped.

Also if you haven't seen it, it is awesome. My wife loves zombie movies, but I am trying frequently to get her to read your book. If it wasn't for sequential art, she would dig it. That said:

4) Do you thing you would ever write or have someone else write a novel for the Walking Dead?

No, but I might write one myself.

and finally

5) I'm sure others have said it, but would you please make it into a tv series or movie series at some point? I would love to see the characters on screen.

Me too—only time will tell.

Thank you for the time. I agree that you shouldn't need to comment anymore on the shipping of the book. I'm just happy that it's there, and I have no problem re-reading to pass the time—I'm still trying to find the re-occurring zombie mentioned in the hard cover.

-Jake Combs

Well, we are always late, but we still put out more comics in a year than a ton of other series, I mean... a ton. So there is cause to complain, we don't hit our exact dates... but we've still made it to issue 46 in just a hair over four years.

With that, I leave you!

See you back here very soon for another rip-roaring instalment of THE WALKING DEAD!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hiya Folks,

Another pulse-pounding issue, leading to the most insane and unexpected climax from the "No One is Safe" storyline.

- Sina Grace

Whoa, intense, huh?

Yeah, I think after this issue you guys can really get a sense of just how much things will be changing after this arc. Big things are in store for this book. These are very exciting times for all of the creative team. I hope you guys are digging it.

Not a lot of time for chatting here—so I'll dive right into the mail.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I started picking up the TWD trades about six months ago, after coming back to comics early last year. Three weeks ago I caught up, bought issue 43, and added 'Dead' to my reserve box. Wednesday, 44 was waiting for me and it was sweet indeed. I knew there would be some kind of battle...but I never expected the Governor to have to turn tail and run. And man, Andrea just gets more and more bad-ass. In fact, it's a testament to your storytelling prowess that I was so concerned about her...that I completely forgot to worry about Rick.

And now the insinuation is you're going to kill him.

I know you're really good with plot twists, but for the life of me I can't figure out which way you're going to go with this. Either way — if he lives or dies — I have no doubt the story will be typically engaging, emotional, and riveting...

But please don't kill Rick.

Come on.

From the last two letters pages it seems some people have a problem with his sometimes-rigidly-enforced leadership. Personally, I never thought Rick overstepped his bounds. If anything it's when he's begun to believe in himself and allow others to make big decisions that things have usually gone horribly wrong. But even if he sometimes gets a little bitchy...

Don't kill Rick.

I'm not going to stop collecting or anything (at least I doubt it) if you do, but...man...I'll be sad. I mean, the guy just had a kid.

Come on.

Al that pining over a fictional character...is directly due to the team on this book. I just want you to know I consider the characters in TWD to be the most realistically drawn (in both senses) and best-written characters in "genre comics" today.

(There might be some romance/emo-notebook/satire thing out there with better characterization, but I don't read that crap.)

(nor should you.)

And I have to second Karth Cashion's comments from the last lettercol. All you Grade A comics scribes are killing us. There's just too much talent out there. What with You, the Powers Guy, the Scary British Somnabulist Fetishist, The Cap-Killer, The Irreverent Irish Shit-Kicker (not to mention the Buffy Guy, the Spies, Sex, & Skullshirt Guy, and the Last-Man-Currently-On-The-Picket-Line) I have very little time to do housework or listen

to charming stories about my friends' children or to complain about politics or reality TV or the religious right...

I can't figure out who you're talking about.

Wait...Oh.. I guess I should thank you...

So...

Thanks for my favorite comic, (and seriously, don't kill Rick.)

JB Love
Savannah, Ga

PS

Hey — if these characters last long enough, it would be really cool to see them make their way down here to Savannah. Our historic district would look great crawling with Charlie Adlard zombies...

I'll see what we can do about getting down to Savannah.

Now, regarding your comments on Rick... I can't really comment. The arc is called "no one is safe" so there's that... and what better way to illustrate that absolutely **NO ONE is safe**. Of course—why would I be so adamantly hinting at something coming up in the book? Wouldn't that just spoil things? Or maybe I'm trying to throw you off... or maybe, just maybe... he'll suffer a fate **WORSE** than death... **Christ—who knows**. I will say... the arc ends next issue... so all answers are contained therein.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

Thank you for writing the most addicting, and best zombie comic ever. I'm only curious about one thing. I was re-reading the first volume, and I realized that the escaped convict that shot Rick putting him in a coma resembles Axel a lot. Is it a coincidence, or will that be brought up later, if Axel was the escaped convict? Thanks for being awesome.

-Dylan Goldman

Pure coincidence... they really don't look THAT much alike. Axel isn't missing any teeth, I believe. It's just like Doctor Stevens, mentioned in issue 2, and Doctor Stevens from Woodbury. The first is named after my family doctor when I was a child... the other is named after none other than Terry Stevens, my friend and artist on a few of my early projects like Battle Pope Presents: Saint Michael.

Dear Robert & Crew

I'll try and keep this brief as I wrote a long brown nosing letter to Invincible today also. Walking Dead, amazing, awesome, always spectacular yadda yadda. Now onto my question. I've thought (And I'm sure others also) that a The Walking Dead TV series would be possibly the greatest serial drama/thriller ever. What's your opinion on this and do you think it would ever happen?

Thanks, keep up the fudging excellent quality.

ReZourceman
Michael Jamieson,

All I can really say is that I'm ALL FOR IT. I can't guarantee it will ever happen, but I'd sure like it to. Who knows? Maybe some day. I often times get emails that say "have you ever considered making it a TV show on HBO?" Well... It's not really up to ME or it would have premiered years ago. So yeah... I'd love for it to happen, but I'd also do my best to make sure it was AWESOME.

Hey Kirkman,
I just read twd 44 loved it, bit of an anti climax but I'm sure they'll be back. I loved seeing the gov all pissed off after Andrea took out half his men seeing him punch that fat guy out of anger was funny. I was so worried for Andrea after seeing the cover to 44 the group really need her skills as a marksman because Glenn can't shoot for shit. Rick is a dead man no one survives being gut shot like that and with their crude medical supplies he's fucked unless the blood is misleading and he's only been grazed. I hope so. Rick deserves a better death than that.

People have survived similar injuries... I promise. Still, though... it remains to be seen if Rick will.

It really shows that you've thought of every angle to make it as real as possible. The fact that the gov didn't all of a sudden show up with a SWAT team but a bunch of rag tag redneck survivors who can't shoot. Has he brought everyone from Woodbury to fight?

Most of them.

You seem to dig criticism so here goes a couple of the WD trades I've bought mainly Volume 3 and 7 look like they were printed using a very crude photocopier the gray tones are so bad when you compare them to my single issues. Have you seen any like this? Also Inevitable volume 8 was the same any comment?

Frankly, Quebecor, the top printer in the country, who printed these trades, has kind of gone downhill. It's something that really frustrates me, because I've been using them since my self-publishing days. Now, I thought copies that were that bad hadn't made it to circulation. A recent reprinting of Volume 3 got printed TWICE by Quebecor before we had to move it to another printer because they just couldn't seem to print something that didn't look like crap. If you got your hands on a bad book, or two, chances are—they're not all like that. You should be able to return it to your retailer for a good copy. I apologize for the inconvenience. Unfortunately, in most cases, I get five copies to look over, and make sure are well-printed... before the whole run ships out, and so there's always the possibility that I'm seeing the BEST of the run, which is frustrating.

Anyway, I believe the problem is fixed now. We'll see.

Also compared to the Inevitable trades The TWD trades are boring! No introductions, no rough sketches or behind the scenes character designs! All stuff us two fans would love. How's about a pin up section in the two singles like in Inevitable?

Well, both books are by me, but I decided to try a different approach with TWD, which came out AFTER Inevitable. With TWD, I try to make the trades the basic story—that's all you get. With the issues you get letters columns, like this one, and bonus stories like the Christmas tale that ran in issue 32—or wherever, which isn't in a TPB. I just wanted to try something different—and this book sells better! Now, there are next to ZERO sketches done for this series... most characters are designed on the page, there's no costumes to design or space ships or whatever like there is with Inevitable, so there's not as much to share—so it makes sense to do this with the TPBs.

Now, as far as pin-ups go... I decided before the book shipped that I would never run pin-ups in this series. The reason for this is that it seemed like a very serious book to me, and I figured ALL the pin-ups would be random zombie drawings or even goofy little drawings featuring the characters doing funny stuff... and I felt that would undercut the tone of the series. So I decided not to run any pin-ups... and every pin-up I've ever been offered has been a random zombie drawing or a funny strip or illustration.

That's all I can find wrong with my favorite comic ever. I just got a special edition of Night of Living Dead with a great documentary called Reflections of the Dead. Half of the actors in the movie were shareholders and collaborators on the film. Did you know George Romero's first company was called Latent Image? Cool, eh?

I didn't know that—that a weird coincidence.

More zombie covers please?

I'll do what I can, I know Charlie likes selling the original art to covers with zombies on it. Wait until you see the cover to 5's—it's AWESOME!

Thanks for listening.
Scott Spencer
UK.

P.S. Kirkman for president

Give it time.

Hello Mr Kirkman'

I like your comic very much, it has the best character development and story of any comic I've read.

I've always loathed superhero comics and grew up with mainly underground comics, heavy meta, and 2000AD as a kid so your comic fits me like a latex gimp suit!

That's what I've always set out to achieve. GREAT mental image...

First and foremost I have to make an ugly confession of a crime for which I have no excuse good enough. I'm stealing your comic through the Internet instead of ordering it from America and would probably never have started reading it if I didn't find it on the internet in the first place. Sorry for stealing the food from your baby's mouth! But this makes me think about something, would it perhaps be possible to start buying scans of your comic from your company's site in the future so I could support you without having to pay for overpriced imports? We don't have a local comic book guy either.

I'm currently exploring options for digital comics. It's something I'm very interested in.

Now for some questions, some of which you've probably already answered somewhere. Your letter pages are the first comic letter pages I've ever bothered to read, but I've got memory like a goldfish.

1) Do you guys that work with the book ever decide to make some zombies look like people you don't like in real life?

Not that I'm aware of. Although, Charlie does seem to draw ME as a zombie in almost every issue... so it's a bit unsettling.

2) What are your top 5 favorite supernatural creatures?

Um... Zombies, Werewolves, Vampires, God and Spider-Man. Heh.

3) Do you sometimes yell a your letters when reading a question from a fan that you've seen at least a hundred times before?

Not often.

4) Do you like mudkips? I like mudkips.

No clue what a mudkip is.

5) Did you play a lot of dungeons and dragons when you were young?

Nope. I've never played it. Tony Moore and I played a lot of Vampire: The Masquerade.

As for comments, uh... I don't really have any, not my biz to tell you how to run your comic. However, I think a very unexpected twist would be if Rick and Tyreese became a gay couple, or if your killed off everyone and the story became all about the governor or if Michonne's other personality became a zombie and she tried to eat people

I've considered the gay couple thing...

It took me a full sixpack of beer to amount enough courage to write this letter so I'd appreciate it if you decided to print it!

Fakename Obvious
From Schweden

I assume that's what we call over here, "Sweden" right? Unless that's a new country invented by Wayne Campbell?

Hey Kirkman,

I'm loving the series, keep up the amazing character development. In issue 44 the letter section said it's time to go from race to "extreme hatred of religion." I figured I'd write in as I'm someone who strives to follow Jesus (the son of God) but also hates religion I don't mean to offend anyone, my POV is that Jesus hoped to break down the idea of religion, not start a new one. No matter anyone's belief I figured all fans of the Walking Dead series would be interested in what it says in Matthew 27:52-53 (any translation). It's one of the things most Sunday school classes would skip. Every time I read it, my reaction is always the same: WHAT?! Enjoy.

Tyler Goodison

London, Ontario

P.S. If you print this thanks for the soapbox. If not, at least I got to point out the scripture to you and to let you know there is one more person in the world who enjoys your work

I don't have a bible... but I do have the internet. Zombies in the Bible. AWESOME.

Dear God of Comics,

THAT'S how you start a letter. Nice.

I just finished issue 44... I must say, I was very happy with it (except Rick getting shot of course). In the back you mentioned that this would be a story arc to bring us through to issue 48. And that there would be a lot of changes. I can see this possibly going one of two ways (or maybe a way that I just don't anticipate, which is always nice). One, you could have Michonne go out with a small group, or by herself, and slaughter the sadistic leader of the group which could lead to everyone staying at the jail after he is gone. OR, you could have the other group win and everyone have to find a new place to live after they get kicked out of the jail, or worse be entertainment for the others.

Also, I am a HUGE zombie fanatic... and TWD is by far my favorite comic. You have taken the zombie genre to a whole new level. Unfortunately I got into TWD in the 30's. I have been scrambling to by the back issues, because let's face it, having the trades is nice but the comics you LOVE you want to own the issues individual y. So you know, if you have any of those coveted first printing number ones I have a birthday coming up (wink wink).

Heh... I do have every issue, but you know... If I gave them to you—I'd have to share with the whole class.

I also have a question/comment to add before I wrap this up. As you are nearing issue 50, have you thought about a possible end in sight for the book? Or a rough estimate on how many more issues you see in the future? Personally though, I would like to see the book go on for as long as it can... I don't want it to end any time soon.

I better see this in an issue (hehe j/k),
Jessica Mikesch

I guess now is as good a time as any to update people on the status of this book's life. I just got sales figures for 49, and it's another jump in sales, but we haven't been gaining every single issue like we did for the first 40 issues or so. We've kind of hit his level, or are only going up slightly... but that's still amazing. If we started losing readers at a slow rate (which is what 99% of comics do) we could probably still make it until 150 before things started looking ugly. So sales-wise we're good. And we're not dropping in sales yet... and our trade paperback collections continue to outsell the majority of Marvel and DC TPBs. The Walking Dead Volume 6 was number 7 on the top 100 graphic novels of 2007 and Volume 7 was number 10. All the other volumes placed on the list, all pretty high as I recall... so we're doing great. Now, as far as I know, Charlie and Cliff are still having a blast, but I won't speak for them.

For me... I can't believe I'm already writing issue 50. That's amazing for me. I feel like I'm writing issue 5, I'm still very jazzed about doing this book, and I see a long, LONG road ahead of me on the series.

Dear Kirkman,

Not much to this issue really. Just...bang, blam, run for your lives! I wouldn't say I didn't enjoy it but, if everything is gonna change soon, then by all means! Wish I had more to say, just, same old same old; and yeah I know my letters haven't been that great recently either.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Yeah, your letters kind of blow, I mean... they're a bit stilted, they only take a second to read, and they don't come in with any kind of regularity. I guess I'll keep reading them. I guess.

Dear Irredeemable Kirk-man,

I enjoy your books. They are good. They are well written and the art is pretty. End of praise

Questions!

1 - If The Walking Dead was a colour, what would that colour smell like?

What's a "colour?"

2 - A doctor tells you have three days to live, but they will be the best three days of your life - Do you laugh or cry?

Cry.

3 - You are fighting an enraged elephant - how do you win?

Body slam.

4 - If, for whatever reason, TWD becomes the next big thing, how far would you sell out? Would we see Zombie Pez Dispensers? Rick's Hand Lunchboxes? Governor Underroos?

All of the above. And I would also hire some ghost-writer to write the book for me while I retire to my giant money bin to admire my lucky dime. Spats.

5 - Will we ever see colour in between the TWD covers? I'm think a symbolic splash of red or something like that at a major major turning point.

Not interested in doing things like that.

6 - Zombies with guns - when?

Never. Romero's evolving zombies are his spin. Mine just keep rotting.

Up with the good work keep,
Uther Dean

Writing for thanks.

Kirkman-

First of all thanks for reading my previous letter and responding to it. I was excited that you did. Thank you!

Secondly I didn't mean to be confusing in my letter. My boyfriend, Jon, was a soldier training for his second tour in Iraq and passed away from meningitis. I'm sorry if I was misleading I didn't mean to be casual about his death but he always told me if he didn't come home from Iraq alive that I should be prepared to find a zombie at my door one day. When you are afraid for someone all the time, everyday, the only thing that keeps you going is laughter. I didn't mean to be casual because it's the most awful thing I've ever dealt with and so many things about it piss me off but I didn't write to unload on you. When you wrote about losing your friend I was thinking of how angry I am too sometimes, I'm angry that I'll never laugh with him again or get to wake up in the mornings snuggled but because of him I still laugh everyday so I try to think of that. I don't know that you will miss the snuggling part so much with your friend, but...well, maybe?

Sadly, no. But I guess I can see where you're coming from. I just can't relate to that. I'm sorry if my response seemed insensitive.

Our humor and love of all things zombie was a big part of us.

Sorry I rambled a lot but while I was excited to see you had responded I was also upset that I was not clear enough in my first letter. I didn't want to fill up your mailbox explaining myself, but I felt like I needed to. Next time I promise to only write in with thoughtful provoking questions and praise for how truly amazing you are

Well, that's really NOT what I prefer but thanks. Thought provoking questions, yet... but praise about how truly amazing I am falls on deaf ears. I hear that shit all the time from my entourage and bevy of beautiful women who are always hounding me. I'm kind of numb to it now.

Anyways, I really only started to write to you the first time because you liked Passions, I got giddy and the ADD part of me kicked in as I was typing... thinking about zombies makes me think about Jon and thinking about Jon makes me think about zombies....

I understand.

I hope this letter has made a little more sense, if not oh well I can't help it if I'm a little crazy...

Thanks again for everything you guys do.
Brandy

Thanks for writing to explain yourself. I was just a bit confused, so thanks for clearing things up.

BTW- I am upset that Passions was canceled now I don't know what to watch when I have sick days.

Just avoid the daytime talk shows like the plague—those things are crazy. Most any soap opera these days is confusing in the most intriguing ways. I forget which one it was but there was 40 characters, about 8 plots handled between commercial breaks and there was all kinds of shit going on with a long lost dad, a woman at the docks trying to blackmail a dude, a police officer being double-crossed and I think there were aliens.

I've got to admit... if this comic thing ever dries up for me—I really, REALLY would like to write for a soap opera... so if anyone is reading this...

Dear Mr kirkman,

You sir are a FUCKER! I hate you so much, I love you! I can only imagine how many e-mails you are going to receive about this months issue # 45. I consider myself a pretty tuff guy but this is tearing me up inside, I can't believe a fucking comic is pulling my strings like this! You KILLED my favorite character or the words exactly "I so biew her FUCKING brains out" words can't describe the pain swirling inside my very soul, AHHHHHHHHH!

I will always continue to spread the gospel on this amazing book and I hope it never stops,

Robert Flesch,

P.S. and since I got your attention I also love your ultimate x-men Great read there also!

Thanks, glad you like Ultimate X-Men. On the Michonne thing—I can't believe you fell for it! Don't worry—she's okay... for now.

You have a great horror comic book here, you know that, so I won't rant and rave about it. I just have one question. When is the video game? Just to let you know I interviewed a real zombie named Dead Pete. He claims he went to Haiti, dated some girl and then jilted her. Her father a shaman, injected him with something in a nightclub, made him into a zombie slave, and that he worked on a plantation for 6 months, until he got out of his zombie state. He wanted me to personally interview him, but claims he has lesions all over his body. I said, "no, I rather just interview you over the phone."

Paul Daie Roberts

Good call... and crazy story. Do you have photos? Weird stuff. Video game? Who knows... maybe never. I'm certainly open to the idea.

I swear to fucking god, if you have michonne go out on a punk ass boba fett-esque death with a gunshot to the head, I will fucking scream, and never stop screaming until my goddamn lungs explode and then they'll have to send me issues of the Walking Dead to me in the hospital, lest I aggravate my condition horribly by ruining my newly sutured lungs. Seriously, I'm on fucking pins and needles here Kirkman, your book is too good for my health. Stop putting that heroin into the ink, I know you do, cause I'm sick, and it's bad.

-Adam

She's okay. I promise... no Fett-Death for her.

Dear Kirk-the-Man,

The dialog seemed very stilted this issue, like every character was rattling off a prepared monologue. That said, it wasn't so bad—there were some major happenings. I've seen in Previews that there's an issue where everyone is Dead And Buried...what then, do they all come back as zombies, too? Maybe I never thought to ask but, is this book black and white for any particular reason? Would you produce it in color if you could? I think the one real drawback to black and white is with the hair color...How Lucille Ball ever became famous as a readhead on a black and white show, I'll never know. By the way, this issue I'd rank last out of the four comics I read today.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Well, when we first started out, one of the reasons I made the book black and white was for cost. Not the MAIN reason, or even close to it, but I figured, y'know—if the book is meant to last for a good long time, I could probably make it to issue 25 even if sales were bad if it was black and white. Also, the book has a lot of GORE, in black and white gore is much more acceptable. See Kill Bill. So I figured we might reach a wider audience in black and white.

Also, Night of the Living Dead was black and white... and as mentioned in the Deluxe Hardcover... this book was originally pitched as a Night of the Living Dead comic, because that title is in the public domain.

Now, I could TOTALLY afford to make this book color, but y'know what... it just wouldn't be the same for me. So sorry... no color... ever. The only time I'd ever do it, is if this book came to an end while still successful, and the TPBs were selling huge, but then died out. I'd wait a few years, and then MAYBE... MAYBE do color collections. But I really don't like the idea of seeing the pages in color.

Like usual I had missed comic Wed. for about three or four weeks in a row and by the time I cleaned out my file I have about 40-something books to sort through. But lucky me since I have Buffy, Invincible and TWD mixed in with various X-Men (yes, Ultimate X-Men as well) titles and Initiative and Countdown crap. I have read through almost everything by now and like usual I always find TWD at the very bottom of the stack. I have finally come to the conclusion that I'm afraid to read this book. Yep, I admit it in plain print. I am a complete pansy when it comes to opening up the cover of this title because thanks to all of your superb characterization I have come to know and love each one of your characters (well, I am kinda glad Carol bit it. She was a complete nutter).

Yeah, she kinda lost it.

As I stare at the cover of issue 44 I am wondering who is gonna make through these pages alive. I was very relieved with what you did with Issue 43 because I wasn't sure if I was ready to deal. I know the story must go on, but I don't know if I'm ready to leave the prison behind. I was starting to like it there. It had become my safe haven. Well, Kirkman.....wish me luck here. I'm gonna bite the bullet and get this over with. I would rather be getting a root canal than have to read this damn book.

Khicks
Dayton, Ohio

Uh... thanks. I think.

Mr. Kirkman,

First off, thanks for the series. It is not getting repetitive or dull. Here are my suggestions for Rick's arm:

- 1.) A skeleton key. With this he can open any lock any time, and anywhere.
- 2.) A pacifier. So that when he's making love to Lori and the baby cries, he can plug its mouth while he plugs his wife. (only new parents can appreciate this)
- 3.) A pen. Because the pen is mightier than the sword. Ok that was just dumb. Forget that one.

Uh... thanks. I think.

Also, Michonne is not dead, I don't believe that husky prick! But when her and Tyreese surprise them you can clearly see she was aiming right for his pudgy head. How did he not suffer from a severed head? And I swear this guy got fatter in the last few issues (he's like the Hurley of TWD, but bad). This is unprecedented, how does someone gain weight in an apocalyptic world like this? And how the hell did Andrea miss a target like him?

She wasn't aiming for HIM.

And furthermore, why don't the characters refer to these dead stinks as zombies? I think it's obvious that 1.) they eat people and 2.) they are dead and rotting corpses that walk. Seems pretty friggin' obvious to me that anybody harboring these two basic characteristics would be a zombie. I mean, if evil creatures appeared only at night and drank only blood showed up in this world to wreak havoc, I don't think it would take me two seconds to figure out they were vampires. I wouldn't call them 'neck biters' or something retarded like that.

Just a thought. I hope this letter stands out enough to be published.

Thanks,
Manny Lerna

Well, the term has appeared in the book before... but for the most part, I think using that term all the time seems weird. Because that term comes exclusively from the movies. I mean, the term existed—but not in the way that Romero zombies are. And nobody in this comic is talking about seeing Day of the Dead or Shaun of the Dead or whatever. So I try to use the term sparingly. I think people would make nicknames for them like biters or roamers... that's just

what people do.

Michonne dead...obviously the Governor hasn't heard of the Chewbacca gambit. Also, that henchman is really fat. I'm sure some of it's hereditary, but statistically speaking, that dude's gonna get got by diabetes or heart disease for a zombie does him in. Someone should really say something to him.

He's trying man... it's not as easy to lose weight as most people think. He tries to hit the gym—but it always seems like something is getting in the way and he doesn't have time. And he'll go like an entire damn week eating good and then cave in and order a pizza on Saturday or eat a delicious burger from Hardee's when friends come over. It's an ongoing struggle, but it's hard enough just to keep from gaining weight most weeks and he's... er... he's... nevermind.

Happy Holidays,
Jeff Janczyk

PS Big Ups to Brian Keene! Just finished Dead Sea, and it was a pretty good read. It had a zombie whale. Spooky.

Fuck—a zombie WHALE?! I need to read that damn book!

Hi Robert,

Thanks for printing my letter in Issue 45. You don't know how much pussy that's gonna get me?

None.

That's a lie.

No kidding.

But it was a great issue, and it totally solidified the suspicion that Walking Dead is the reason I read comics. The major thrill of the medium, for me at least, is less about superheroes or cool art or whatever, and more about the excitement of serialized storytelling. Unless you count soap operas, where else but comics can you be part of a story that could literally go on forever? And the serialized thrills of the Walking Dead are so much better than other comics because there's real change here every month. People die. People leave. People are left with 50% fewer hands. That kind of upheaval just doesn't happen to iconic characters in corporate titles. It's not like DC would up and decide to give Bruce Wayne a wooden leg.

Pirate Batman!

I guess that's why I buy the monthly issues as opposed to the trades, and I guess that's why it's the first comic I read from the stack. I can't wait to see what happens next.

Now kill off that prison doctor and see what kind of hell breaks loose the next time someone needs urgent medical care. The thought of Axel having to perform crude surgery with instructions he read out of a "For Dummies" book makes me salivate.

Keep up the good work,
Kid Kaos

Axel isn't going to be doing much of anything after THIS issue. And sorry about that, by the way... he was a favorite of mine too.

Man,

I just got caught up on Issue #45 and all I can say is what will you throw at us next? Anyone else about the join the ranks of the undead? How long do you think this series will run? I apologize in advance if you've already addressed this in a previous message but I am a relatively new fan. I started in October and just began devouring (no pun intended) TWD.

George

Issue 50 is the last issue. (kidding)

Kirkland Rathton,
I'm dead. Officially. Your book just killed me.

Man, Michonne????!! WHY MICHONNE????!! I want to keep thinking that I can't trust that dude Gabe at all when he says her shot her, but STILL!

Sucker!

And Tyreese in the clutches of the vile Governor! When will this all end?

Issue 50. (kidding again)

Commence numbered questions.

1) Can't remember if you've seen this but if not you should totally rent (or BUY) the "UNDEAD" DVD. It'll help when the a-jiens arrive in Issue #75 (only 30 more to go!!!). I saw the movie back in 2003 with my zombie crew and I loved it. Three words. Zom. Bie. Fish.

Yeah, Undead is a special kind of awesome. Great, GREAT goddamn movie!

2) I've read your IGN interviews of late and there was a lot of talk about Invincible in the Image Universe and how he interacts with other characters like Savage Dragon, etc. Where does TWD fall in terms of universes?

It is its own place. Assume it's the real world—and zombies broke out. It is completely unconnected to the Invincible Universe—where Brit, The Astounding Wolf-Man, Capes, Tech Jacket and Invincible all take place.

3) OH SNAP! Kirkmania.com is up and running! Can't wait for the rest of the site to get worked out. And as a side-note, I love the mini-Kirkman drawing. I vaguely remember Otley doing several characters in that caricature style but can't remember where. Don't you wish you had a plush mini-Kirkman doll at home?

I've considered making plush dolls, because to me, it seems SO narcissistic that it's FUNNY... but I think it would make most people think I'm a total ASSHOLE, but I thought about it so seriously that I almost had a prototype made. And those caricatures of me are drawn by young Nate Bellegarde, who is drawing Invincible Presents: Atom Eve... and BRIT starting with issue 7.

4) It's the holidays and I can imagine that after a Zombie Apocalypse they take on an extra-special significance. You know... Egg nog. Brains. Loved Ones. Brains. Presents. Chestnuts and Brains roasting on an open fire. But it makes me miss Morgan and Duane all the more... seeing as we last saw them in the Image 2005 Christmas Special. Please. Throw us a bone here. Morgan and Duane still around? Duane's batteries had to have run out by now, right? And if not, he's gotta be TOTALLY done with those games. Please give us some clue. Please, Kirkman, it's the holidays. Do it for the children.

Duane's probably not playing a whole lot of Gamboy these days. We will see them again... some day.

Well, again, you da man. Happy Holidays. Can't wait for Walking Dead AND Invincible #50!!! Crazy, huh?

Very crazy.

I'm going to bed. With visions of TWD Hardcover Vol. 3 in my head.

Good night,
Dan "Kentucky" Benningfield

PS The letters you printed of mine in Wolf-Man and Invincible have made me the coolest Kirkman fanboy in all of Comicaizi-land. The guys at the store loved it. Thanks for bringing joy to this nerd's heart. Now maybe if you'd print this, the circle would be complete, as they say.

Circle complete.

Okay kids, that's all we have time for this month. I'll see you all back here very soon.

Until then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

HI ALI!

The countdown begins to the last Weekly issue! Until then, enjoy these letters about poor Tyrese.

-Sina

Well, this issue is a bit of a change of pace from previous issues, I hope you've all enjoyed it.

Kind of crunched for time right now--so let's just jump feet first into the ol' mailbox.

Yo Kirkman,

I got into TWD about six months ago and initially thought "what the hell, it's black and white. This isn't the 20's" but after picking up issues #7-41 (#1-6 are impossible to find thusly insanely expensive), I couldn't imagine it in color. It would take away from its gritty realism. Now it's my favorite book on the shelf. I've even gotten my friend into TWD who previously scoffed anything comics.

Anyway, this is my first time writing to a letters column and I just wanted to let you know that I just finished reading issue #46 and it... was AWESOME!

Not to sound like some sick bastard, Governor wannabe, but Tyrese getting his head cracked off was too cool. It was definitely worth the wait. I like Tyrese and everything but when I saw the cover I thought "he's not gonna kill him," then you did, it was real and that's what I love about the series. No one is spared. Though if anything happens to Lori, Carl or Judy as the cover of issue #47 depicts, I'm gonna be seriously pissed (I'll still read since it would drive Rick over the edge and shit would hit the TWD fan and that would be awesome) but I'll totally be mad at you.

Heh--skip issue 48!

So you, Rad-Ad and Spiff-Cliff keep up the good work and my stupid roommate and I'll keep reading the best book out there

Oh yeah, and kill that Governor asshole.

Later,
Dave Hodge

Governor dead? Check!

Mr Kirkman,

This is actually the first letter I've written to TWD.. or any comic for that matter, but the events of #46 forced my hand. I mean, I know this arc is called 'no one is safe' but that doesn't lessen the blow Tyrese will be missed. He's been one of my favorite characters since he was introduced

As brutal as it was, the thing that struck me the most was how honest the cover art was. We've all been guessing on the forums and such, but I don't think any of us really thought Tyrese would die in the issue with the cover where it looked like he was going to die. What a mindf*ck! Trick us with the truth. I love it. It just makes me nervous about #47.. poor Lori and Judy. The fence looks like it's seen better days too.

Alan

PS Please don't kill Axel! If you must.. I hope he goes out with a bang, uncommon Valor style. Gene Hackman kicks ass

Yeah, the biggest casualty in the series so far--the fence! I wanted Axel's death to be pretty abrupt and final... like things would be in real life. No speech, no moment of heroism or sacrifice... just a sound and a fallen body. Probably didn't live up to what you wanted... but most deaths wouldn't in real life. Not many people really get to go out in a grand style.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

Thank you for such an incredible series. I love that TWD explores the ways in which different people react to living in a world that's practically different from what they're used to. I've gotten so attached to the characters, and in issue 46 I realized something about Rick that I hadn't fully appreciated before--his room will. Here he is, with a missing hand, using crutches, and yet still fully focused on survival. As the Governor hacks off Tyrese's head, the others turn their heads away or try to cover their eyes, but Rick stays facing forward and stands perfectly still. I love that his eyes are covered in shadows in that

panel-- we don't know if he's closing his eyes or if he's watching the Governor, and the shadows make him look emotionally deadened, just for that moment. My guess is that Rick's watching the Governor-- as awful as it is, someone needs to be watching the Governor, to see what he does next

I'm so glad that Michonne is still alive and fighting! Please, please don't kill her off for a long time! I'd really like to learn more about her past. She just fascinates me. I disagree with the fans who think that your pacing is too slow. I love a lot of the background information and all of the attention that you give to developing the characters.

Thanks, in return, Michonne is alive... for now.

When I saw the preview for the next issue, I yelled! Not Lori and the baby. I often gasp or exclaim out loud while I'm reading TWD. I'm just so into the story! When my husband hears me, he knows there's no fire-- I'm just devouring the latest issue of TWD. :)

Thanks for a great series-- I'll be reading it and re-reading it for years to come.

Jeanne-Marie

Thanks a lot. Maybe I'm just now noticing, or maybe things really are picking up--but the female readership seems to be growing... and that makes me happy. Ladies seem to be a bit more discerning to me when it comes to entertainment... so I take it as a huge compliment. Thanks for writing Jeanne-Marie.

So Tyrese bites it, and not even by a zombie. That's kinda' shitty. Actually, this is really upsetting. I know "no one is safe", blah, blah, blah, people die in zombie books, but to get it from a crazy cock-sucker, like the Governor (who really should be dead) is just fucked. I just hope Michonne goes all Pam Grier on his motherfuckin' ass. Don't puss-out on this one Kirkman!

Oh, yeah, love the book. Keep writin'.

Dave

Well, The Governor is dead now... but again, I thought it was a bit too unrealistic to have Rick or Michonne do the deed... a little too clean story-wise. I suppose I should wait until letters come in for issue 48 to reply to all this stuff...

This is a first for me. Never written to one of you funny book guys before, but you finally made me do it, you killed off Tyrese, fuck me rigid didn't think you'd do it. He'd become one of my favorite characters in the series and you offed him. After the zomb necking I guess I should of realized you weren't pulling any punches but damn. I got into your book after telling a friend who was just getting into comics about Bendis, he returned the favor by telling me about some fellow named Kirkman, I grabbed the first trade and was hooked, immediately getting the rest of the trades and looking into this Inevitable thing and some I'll book called Battle Pope

Congratulations sir you've created some of the best mythology anyone's come up with in years. I was even able to get my girlfriend into Dead, the first comics she's ever been interested in

You're a worthy heir to Romero in the canons of zombie storytelling, thank you and keep up the amazing work.

Ivan

p.s. Ignore all the whiny bastards complaints about pacing, after years of dealing with the big boys dragging shit out until the next big crossover and then letting us down with a minor character death or surprise resurrection, your willingness to kill characters we truly feel invested in is a heart wrenching welcome, keep making me mourn.

Damn it, I wish I could go one letters column without Bendis getting mentioned. I know he spends hours scanning these things to see if his name is mentioned... it's almost the only thing he lives for these days. It's so sad. I mean, I guess if it makes the guy happy... but whatever.

As far as the pacing comments go. I do read the criticism and take it to heart but I just do what I want for the most part. It's hard to take the criticism seriously when sales are still going up.

KIRKMAN!

You, sick fucker!, I didn't care much for the Governor when he was mutilated, but Tyreese? fuck me! I had already found out about his decapitation from the Kirkman fan boards (yeah thanks for the spoiler warning "ChaosTheory" pft) But to do it in several attempted swings and with mid-death gurgling! ewww ... fucking crazy! Am I right to say that he finally severed it with a kick? You're a sick s ck man.

Sorry about the spoilers... I'm trying to get a handle on that place. And yes--the kick is what finally did it.

This is my second letter in a matter of days, but I couldn't help myself. Poor Tyreese and after he did so well to survive being locked in the prison gym alone. Mind you, what a fucking idiot to leave in the first place! It's a guess but I think Michonne is the one holding the gun to Lori's head (#7), after they let her man die (she's fucking nuts after all). Are you preparing yourself for the mindless idiots that address racism with everything the book puts out? What's the world coming to, hey?

It hasn't happened so far... but hey--everyone is entitled to their opinion. It's not that much of a problem.

I saw Cloverfield (WATCH THIS MOVIE!) last night and someone actually complained on a website about the -ooting scene because the thieves were all portrayed as "black guys" tsk tsk.

I don't recall the specifics of that scene, but if EVERYONE in that place in the movie was black... they'd have a solid reason for an argument. Just like if I'd ONLY killed Black people in my book... things would be a bit more suspect.

Just keep this up man, I won't praise you because your ego might take over and you might do something stupid, like continue to write Marvel Zombies--they milked it enough already!!

Adam

That's right--THEY did. I've only done 11 issues of that series.

P.S Lori is a little ♥ you follow me?

If I knew what a "fittle" it I would. Isn't he a rapper?

O Kirkman! my Kirkman!

Dude, thank you so much for satisfy ng my craving for a realistic (or at least pseudo-realistic... if you will...) zombie story. I was getting tired of the same old stagnant, ever re-hatched zombie stories that I've been coming across in my day. I know some people dream about what I would be like to live in a zombie-nestled, psycho-killer ridden society, and your comic allows us to get a taste of that from the comfort of our homes, here in reality.

What's real estate go for there?

The Walking Dead is one of the few comic series whch I look forward to on a regular basis and make a point to pick up (I live in a small town in Canada. I don't have ANY place to buy comics. It's bothersome, man. REAL bothersome. I take a 2-hour train ride to Toronto on a monthly basis in order to pick up your tit e two-dollar-and-ninety-nine-cent-wonder. I mean, I'll be honest, I do other stuff while I'm there, but The Walking Dead is one of the most enticing aspects of my journey). Most of the "mainstream" (I don't really like that word, but hey, bear with me) comic stuff that I check out just doesn't do it for me.

Then stop reading it! Only buy books you like and comics as a whole will get better! The "mainstream" which, honestly, is pretty great right now for the most part--will only get better if people stop buying books out of habit. Nobody saw Batman and Robin out of habit... and what happened? Batman Begins. Think about it.

I tend to live in the past, reveling in the glory days of comic series long-since dead...(in most cases gone long before I was even born.. I'm seventeen...) out your Walking Dead evokes a kind of spirit that I s mssed in what is a more modern, commercial comic bus-ness.

As a side note, .. I REALLY appreciate the fact that there are no god-damn advertisements spped in the middle of every other page in your books. I get enough images of Spongebob promoting his latest DVD and the Hu k to ling me how great some new car is whenever I pick up a Marvel comic, thank you very much!

I'm also glad to see that the bombardment of letters labelling you as some sick racist fuck have subsided (either that or you have simply stopped publishing them). That really pissed me off. The lengths some people will go to in order to justify claims that have absolute y no basis... It's sickening!

They stopped, thankfully. There really never were all THAT many, though.

Anyways, you're probably getting tired of reading my ramblings, but hey, I've never written to a writer I adm re before, and I sure as hell love to write (which brings me to another point: haha, writing is what I do, and I have often hypothesized about what a professional life as a writer would be like. I tel ya, it's titillating! I consider myself to be somewhat of a writer, and seeing someone like you being able to compose something like the Walking Dead gives me faith!)

I guess I's about time to wrap th's up..

oh wait
no it sn't

one final point.

the behedding of Tyreese... HOLY SHIT, MAN probably THE most intense collection of pangs I've ever been within (physiological y, of course) It was absolutely crazy, man. I loved t and hated it I loved to hate it, and I hated to love it

You're good at what you do, man. Keep it up, I'm lovin' it, and I'm sure a hell

of a lot of other people are too.

Christian Julien Siroyt

Thanks, man. As I type this it's 4pm on a Monday and I'm sitting at my desk in my pajamas... I haven't showered, I'm not wearing shoes... my basement is nice and cool... It's the best job in the world, sir... I totally recommend it. And at 17, if you're smart about it--you could totally pull it off.

IF MICHDONE DON T S-HOOT THE GOV IN THE HEAD . I LL STILL BUY LR BOOK NO MATTER WH-AT!

I know they will a I DIE. It's the only thing we know in life. So keep making me scream sht like "JUST FUCKING SHOOT HIM BITCH!"

Wth love/hate
=PP=

Hah hah.

Mr Kirkman,

When they killed Gwen Stacy in Amazing Sp derman #121, I was there. When they killed Barry Allen (The Flash) n Crisis on Infinite Earths #8, I was there. When they killed Jason Todd in " Batman A Death in the Family " I was there. When they killed Superman, I was there. When they killed Kid Miracleman in Miracleman #15, I was there. When they killed Captain America in #25, I was there. When they killed The Elongated Man in 52. #42, I was there. When they killed Rorschach in " Watchmen #12, I was there. When you killed Bishop in X-Men # 90, I was there. When you killed Angstom Levy in Invincible #33, I was there. Ux ect ect

The death of Tyreese was more emotional than all of them put together. You have such a great writing style that makes you care for the cast of TWD like they were real people. Great job.

Tyrese

R.I.P.

Walking Dead #7-#46

Erik Porter

Thank you, sir.

Kirkman, I haven't picked up a comic since the early 70s. One day a few years back I was shopping with my nephew for some Oogio cards, if that's how it's spelled, and I stumbled upon The Walking Dead and I've been hooked ever since. I love zombies

Heh... Oogio.

Now I never thought I'd be one of those geeky fan boys standing up and talking technical issues at a SciFi con or similar forum, but here we are

A few issues back, 44 or so, the Governor was talking about how it took his men "months" to learn to drive the "tank." First, it appears to be a Bradley Fighting Vehicle. Close enough, it is an armored vehicle, tankish to a puke civilian. It doesn't take months to learn to drive a tank or other armored veh c e. I earned how to drive a M60A3 main battle tank at Fort Knox while in the Army Reserve in the early 80s in about 30 seconds. Turn on the fuel pump, the ignition, and it steers with a wheel or stick and has brake and throttle pedals. It's not like you have to practice parallel parking. You're proficient in minutes. Firing that main gun would take longer, like 10-15 minutes. Seriously, if you're familiar with assault/automatic weapons, you can shoot just about anything. Brad eys usually sport a M242 Bushmaster chain gun. Simple to load and fire

However, if you're tooling around in an armored vehicle for months you will have serious maintenance issues. Heavy equipment requires heavy maintenance. They throw tracks, consume huge amounts of fuel and oil, need all kinds of filters, or they just cut. They're rated at hours between breakdowns. A lot of key parts wouldn't be stored at a National Guard/Reserve armory. Fill out a form, wait a few weeks. It's the military way. Just a little military vehicle FYI

Oh, you think you know more about this stuff than I do... really... mister "Oogio"? Trust me... my research into these matters is meticulous.

A few other things have been bugging me too. Why hasn't Rick or anyone looked for a phone book, the yellow pages, to see what kind of local resources that were available, and may still be available? I'm surprised that no one has needed a pharmacy or auto parts or other common sht that we take for granted in our day to day lives. If they're staking out their claim at the prison, it would make sense rather than driving around and poking. I'd bet there are phone books in that prison. The local Southern States or other farmers co-op would be a good place to know about. Go get a load of lime and spread around your perimeter and that will slow down rotting flesh. It'll speed up the decomposition, post-haste

Another thing, as a southerner all my life (I live in Louisville, right up the road from you), I can't imagine rotting bags of flesh lasting long in the heat. Putrefaction, along with the flies, and the hornets/yellow jackets, turkey buzzards, etc. would consume them rather qu ckly. Take a trip down I-75 to the greatest school in history, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and I bet you cou d get a tour of the body farm. It'll be an eye opener

With them up and walking around and stuff--I assume I'm given a little bit of leeway on the realism. If all the zombies just rotted realistically and went away... this book wouldn't be nearly as fun. I'm just assuming whatever is making them walk around is also preserving them a little.

Any way, I love the book and look forward to each issue. I was deeply saddened to see Tyreese go this last issue. He will be missed.

Unless you're a hungry zombie, that is

Bill Locke

Hey, thanks for writing Bill. I really appreciate the oversight. I do try my best to keep things on the up and up... but at times, things just need to be inaccurate for story purposes. Pay attention to Rick's gunshot wound... that's probably the most unrealistic thing in the book so far. At the end of the day, it's still a work of fiction--it's not more unrealistic than your average movie or television show.

Dear Cap,

Whoa, muchro shocking. That guy Tyreese musta had a thick neck, eh? I've seen Erik Larson's cover to *TWD* 50... unless my eyes deceive me. I see superheroes. One of 'em looks like Rick Grimes. I doubt that you would do that with this series, though, so I don't know whether to be encouraged or not; superheroes are the bomb, of course. It should be a good time for this book soon, cause by my math there should be about 4 issues in the next few months! Hey how about a "Spider-Man, Team-up" series!! I see no reason to keep calling them Marvel Team-Up... all it means is Spidey WON'T be in every issue, like he used to be, but I don't expect you to understand, you started reading in '90!

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Yeah, I can say right now that there will NEVER be superheroes in this series. So don't let that ultra-rare variant for issue 50 fool you. It's just a fun thing we're doing for the big anniversary. It doesn't reflect the insides at all--you'll notice Tyreese and The Governor are not that cover.

Hi, hello, and Greetings from your neighbor from the north(Ohio) My name is Heath and I have been a fan of your work for the 2 short years I have been into comics. My friends, Jamie and Theresa of Packrat comics in Hilliard, Ohio recommended Walking Dead to me. Walking Dead was one of the stories that kept me going with comics (I have a problem with sticking with a hobby for more than 6 months). I'd never thought a horror comic could keep my attention, because I thought they were too hokey like the movie "Dawn of the Dead". I also enjoy CrawlSpace. XXXombies pencilled by previous Walking Dead artist Tony Moore.

You mean Kieron Dwyer right? Tony only co-plotted that book... or something.

I was wondering, is there ever a thought of ending this story? I wouldn't want that to happen in the near future, but if there is, how would you end it?

Not something I'd answer in a letters column. I don't plan on ending this series any time soon.

Another thing, I think Walking Dead would be a better cable Mini-series rather than a movie, because if it were a movie, the stories details that make it would be hacked and slashed, like an Alan Moore film, and it would suck balls hard.

Thanks for the Walking Dead,
Heath Grimm

A cable mini-series would be pretty good. I love me some John Adams on HBO. HBO, are you there? Mini-series please.

Mr Kirkman,

I have just finished reading the walking dead 46 and at the same time I am watching the legion of superheroes. What do they both have in common? No african americans in the future. Well okay one or two. It seems like the white man has systematically figured out a way to eliminate us out of comics as well as television. Well your walking dead book which is based out of the city that I'm living in (Atlanta) is down to one character of color. Funny considering when I walk out the door I only see people of color. I'm wondering where all these tough white folks come from. I mean if you look at T.V. and comics African Americans are all dead, homosexual, drug addicts or prostitutes. Funny to me whatever sport we play whether it be golf or football we are leaders, and if Mr. Kirkman you haven't noticed we may be putting a person of color in office. What does that mean? It means you smack, that we are not stupid either. I know you have a predominantly white audience but give me a break do you really believe that whites are as tough as you make them out to be? In the same passage do you really believe that African Americans are as weak as you and the media makes us out to be? It literally takes a group of racist to down one person of color. I still love the book with its closet racism but believe me when I say that we see what you and the media is doing. As always we shall overcome.

Rich

Michonne is the strongest character in the book. I killed one black person and a billion white people recently. As for Atlanta, the book takes place a great many miles from the city... and I'm willing to bet the rural areas around Atlanta are not predominantly black areas. Also, most of the people were herded into Atlanta for safety and died. Our characters are all from surrounding areas, not Atlanta. I also don't recall ever portraying black people to be stupid--but whatever, you've got a point to make, I suppose.

Tyreese's death is a testament to how important he was to the series... a great character gets a great, eventful death.

I'm not going to defend myself any more. There will be more people of color in this series... and they will eventually die... just like all the white people in the series. And the argument will continue.

He lo,

I just recently got into your book, and I've got to say it's one of the most compelling I've read, but I'm sure you're sick of hearing that. I'm always imagining how a zombie outbreak would go down here in Tokyo. Anyway, I was just wondering why wasn't Otis buried along with Carol and Allen? I noticed at the funeral for Caro there were only two burial plots. Although he was just a minor character, he seemed to have spent enough time with group to warrant a proper burial rather than being burned with the rest of the others. He wasn't that much of a prick, was he?

Well, they used to let him watch the kids.

Anyway, keep up the good work, sucks about Tyreese, can't wait to see what happens next.

Joey Jamir

Otis wasn't buried because he didn't have much left of him and didn't die at a time when the burying would have been easy to do. There were tons of zombies to clean up... and Otis was a zombie... Allen and Carol weren't zombies.

Dear Mr Kirkman

Having just read issue 46 of The Walking Dead, I have to say, wow! Just when I think things are calming down for the characters of this book, something like this happens and I am blown away. I had to re-read the scene detailing the execution of Tyreese four or five times. I could not believe what I was seeing and am still in a state of shock and disbelief.

Never, has a work of fiction caught me so off guard. Never

Well done, The Walking Dead will always have a place in my heart, albeit a very dark, sinister place.

Sincerely,
Alan Marsh

R.S. I hope Michonne guts the Governor and feeds him his remaining eye

Sorry to disappoint you on the governor thing.

Hello,

I don't care if this gets printed or not. I would just like to say that I feel you handled Tyreese's death with class. I loved that character and I was pained to see him go as he was my favorite character besides Rick. Ironically my first letter to be printed in a book was in #46 with Tyreese being dead and all. So yes, I was both sad and happy in the same issue. That's why I love this book. Despite what anybody says it's flawless. Keep up the outstanding work sir

May the dead keep walking,
Adam Davis

Yay--happiness and sadness... my bread and butter.

Kirkman,

First off, I would like to tell what an absolute great series you are writing. I was never a fan of the whole zombie genre until I read Walking Dead. I wrote them off as rehashes of great storytellers of old. Only after the insistence of a friend did I pick up Walking Dead and find this treasure trove of zombie greatness. After reading issue 46 (as a ways great) I read your letter about taking hits on the lack of minorities in your book. A few issues ago a friend of mine wrote you about this matter. While I agree that minorities are sadly under-represented in comics as they are in any form of entertainment and literature, it is not your torch to bear. First off take a look around the comic world and how many minority superheroes can you count? This leads me to the point that Walking Dead is not a superhero book. The Walking Dead to me is the representation of what would happen in real life in the context of an apocalyptic event. People need to realize that your book only deals with a small group of people who have found each other. You are not showing an entire country filled with thousands of survivors speckled with one or two minority characters. Not to mention the fact that Michonne is the fucking RAMBO of the title. A black female is the one character who is handing out beatings like cheeseburgers at McDonalds. I hope Walking Dead continues for years to come

P.S. Please let Michonne go straight ninja on The Governor.

Thanks Again,
Tim Sayior

Face it, folks... I love black people!

Greetings Robert,

It's writers such as yourself that give hope to writers such as myself. I left comic books 'for good' during the speculative era a decade and a half ago because, for the most part, what was on the shelves sucked. Flash covers and boated cross-overs had led a creativity from the entertainment medium I most loved, so I just stopped reading. Most did eventually and the rest is history.

You, sir, I think are 80% responsible for bringing me back into the fold. While I kept on reading my old stuff from the Silver Age to around 1992, I had not read anything "new" since around 1993 or 94. A friend slipped me some of Brubaker's Cap re-launch and I loved it. Then I walked into a comic shop called Nostalgia Newsstand during a brief stay in North Carolina and asked the guy behind the desk to recommend me the absolute best written series out today. "That's WALKING DEAD, sir." I bought trade #1 and after reading it drove back the next day and bought every trade available at the time. That evening I started reading and did not stop until I had finished. Soon after I snagged issue #0 of INVINCIBLE and said, OK, I am already hooked and bought your stupendously huge and expensive Hardcover of the first 24 issues. I read it in one sitting (God, my ass hurt from that). Yeah, I wished I had not read #0

because I knew the big twist, but it still rocked something fierce

Since then I have not looked back. While my starving writer budget will not allow for a huge reading list, there is no do.Bt WD and INVINCIBLE are my two favorites. Your writing, pacing, building of suspense and richness of characters is a thing of beauty. It's given me the kick in the ass I needed to pursue a lifelong dream and create my own comic book(s). After months of hard work I am now talking to two different publishers about two of my would be projects and it is very exciting. Even if it doesn't happen this time, it will eventually because I have found my groove. So thanks for that.

Congratulations, sir!

Now let me ask you some silly questions and make a few WD related comments.

1. I sold my trades for WD in bulk figuring I'd buy the hardcovers. Grabbed the signed V2 and V3 on sale the other day, though they were sold out of #1. The price jump from V2 to V3 was 100%! What the heck was up with that? \$30 to \$60? Did paper go up that much? Please tell me V4 is not \$120! Yowzer! Forgive me if this has been addressed before. If so, just ignore me

The signed edition of the V2 HC was also \$60 but the price was not printed on the actual book, it was a sticker. The \$30 price was printed on the book under the sticker... It's a long story. The smaller hardcovers will always have a \$30 regular edition and \$60 signed edition.

2. There is no need to go into the origins of why the world went all zombie. That's not the central story. Ignore those who ask

Great question!

3. People keep talking about a movie or television adaptation. A movie won't do it. Your story is far too complex for a 2 hour cliff notes version. It would not do your work justice. Frankly, the only route I see is an HBO or Showtime series, which would allow for no pulled punches. Both networks are damned near putting porn onto their broadcast signal. The violence allowed is way beyond an MPAA sanctioned R. Ever see ROM? Good Lord. You'd be able to tell your story in all of its glory because no way could you do it on free broadcast Network television! Fact is, done right the show could run for years. But I know how difficult it is to get such dears and the politics involved. Good luck.

We have come close... but obviously haven't quite gotten there yet.

4. I think it's time you had a guest appearance from Spawn or perhaps Cerebus. Just kidding :-)

Hah.

5. The continued killing off major characters is welcome. Have you ever considered that maybe one or two characters are so popular with readers that killing them would result in a huge drop-off of readers? That kind of thing can happen. If you killed off our fearless one-handed leader, well, good luck with that because it would be brutal. Fans at conventions would come after you with their pitch forks and torches

Kindest regards,
Matt S.

We'll see... er.

Mr Kirkman,

First off, let me just say, I AM a fan. Have been for a while. I've got the hardcover Invincible collections, I've liked some of your work at the big M, and I really enjoyed Walking Dead for the first couple dozen issues or so. That said, I have to inform you I'm dropping the title

Wait a minute... you stopped liking the book after issue 24 and it took you until 46 to drop the title?!

While the death of Tyreese is part of it, let me reassure you that I'm not another ranting, raving "U R a racist!!" goon here to flip out about the minority. If his death had any special impact, it was that he was one of the few characters I still cared about in the story, his color had nothing to do with it (I'm white, anyway, and we're not allowed to call racism). What really killed the whole thing for me was your return to the cliché "the humans are worse than the monsters" hackery that I'd hoped we'd left behind with the end of the first Governor arc. The Governor character (more like caricature) was witty and lacked any redeeming qualities, but he served his purpose as a temporary distraction from the zombies (as worst as I am to admit it, they can get a little boring as antagonists). I was left with a bad taste in my mouth after that storyline for all the wrong reasons... 1, like many, was rooting for Michonne to kill him after we'd put with her repeated rape and torture long enough that I no longer had any impact, and we were left just itching for them to get out of the town and move on. You seemed to try too damned hard to make us hate him, with his feeding the helicopter crash victims to zombies, cutting off Rick's arm, then feeding the hand to his "daughter" (which we've now sunk from implied "zombie incest" to blatant, overt zombie incest as last issue featured him pulling out her teeth so he could open zombie kiss her until he vomited), and I just didn't give a damn anymore when it turned out he survived. Michonne didn't just stab him when she had to leave? Whatever.

We then get to this issue, which starts with a convoluted and insipid geyaway that Michonne didn't really die at the end of last issue pointless two man attack on the retreating bad guys, apes with a drawn out beheading over some 14 panels as our heroes stand there and watch like they care less than we do at this point, and then the Governor drives off and flips out, only to have Michonne teleport (BAMF!) next to him with an Uz while there's two dozen people watch n'g, and just stands there instead of shooting him. I know, that wouldn't have given us another (yawn) cliffhanger end ng, but it DID deliver another helping of "I don't really care anymore."

How long she stood there--and her teleporting in is kind of left to the reader to interpret. It's a comic. You can read it like she's standing there for a month, or she could be stepping out and putting the gun to his head right away. It's all up to you.

I hope she shoots him, but they find him two issues later (when they realize she's shot him and walked off), and it turns out he just lost the other eye, and we get a few more issues of him doing something as se meaningless and grotesque (maybe he'll come back and have sex w th Tyreese's corpse, while Rick explains, disappanated, that this may give Michonne time to escape) Because, really That will drive home the point that you've given up on the book like the rest of us.

I guess things COULD be worse... Julie could have been a zombie baby.

Still reading Invincible,
Steve

Well, thanks for reading Invincible. I'm sure I don't need to say this to most of you, but I haven't "given up on the book" not by a long shot. There's a lot of very cool stuff on the horizon. The book has been darker than usual as of late (which probably didn't seem possible) but it's all about cycles, things will return back to "normal" eventually.

Mr. Kirkman,

Wow That was one of the few times I have actually swore out loud whilst reading a comic Tyreese's death was so unexpected that even after I'd seen the Governor kick his severed head out of the truck I was still wondering how you were going to explain his marculous survival. Although he was one of the strongest characters I can totally understand why he was killed; now nobody seems safe and the Governor seems like even more of an irredeemable evil dickhead. I really, really want him to die, which obviously means you know how to write a good villain.

Yay!

The only problem I had with Tyreese's death was the fact that the other survivors let it happen so easily. I know the Governor told them that he had Michonne and that if anything happened to him she'd be killed, but it still seemed kind of out of character especially for Rick. Most of the survivors have known Tyreese a lot longer than Michonne and it seems to me that they like him a lot more as well. It seemed they had the perfect opportunity to put a bullet in his brain and then they could worry about trying to save Michonne

Consider the geography. Shooting The Governor, who was armored, without hitting Tyreese and killing him yourself would have been tricky. Also, the Governor was all talk up until the moment he slammed that sword down on Tyreese for the first time. And after that, he was pretty much dead... and everyone was in shock. There's a few reasons why they reacted the way they did. The situation was far from ideal--but that's how life is.

On another note, Axel is fast becoming my favorite character. I really like the way the other characters treat him like an inconvenience that they have to put up with and the way none of them seem to trust him. I felt really sorry for him when he was basically ignored after he was shot. I'm hoping that at some point in the future he'll have a great heroic moment where he gets to prove himself. Either that or he'll betray them all and side with the governor.

Keep up the good work,

Sincerely,
Adam Pilegone.

I do miss Axel a great deal--for what it's worth.

Hey Kirkman,

I'm long time fan of the walking dead and I'm really sad to see Tyreese go. His passing was well in line with the other characters in the series and I love how you do not give preferential or detrimental treatment to minority characters. That said, we are down to two prominent minority characters, and by the time this ether is printed there may be none left. If I'm not mistaken, the prison is somewhere near Atlanta, Georgia. The population of the state is 39% minority, and that is not reflected in your story. I think that if roughly 2/5ths of a region is affected by a zombie apocalypse are minorities, roughly 2/5ths of the survivors would be minority. I love your series, and will continue to be a fan, but give me a fucking break, we need more color in the story.

-Luis

You'll have it, sir! Scout's honor.

I doubt that you will print this, I love your comic, but I can't help but notice that the worst things to happen to your characters always seem to happen to the black people, despite that there's not many n the comic in the first place Atlanta is 67% black (fwi). The only gay activity took place between two black males, and all the violence done to blacks are very detailed, the only oral sex is by a black woman, just saying but it's your comic, you can do what you like.

Thanks,
Titus Ashley

I see where you're coming from. Although, I don't know why you find gay activity to be counted among the worst thing to happen to a character in the book. I've gone over why Michonne was raped before. Tyreese death was explored so thoroughly, and in detail, not because he was black and I was reveling in the murder--but because, in my opinion he was the second most important character in the book... and killing him was a big deal. His death, in a lot of ways, was more shocking than Lori's death... which is quicker.

You have a valid complaint, and I do recognize it... but you are reading into things a little bit. Just the same, I will do my best to make horrible things happen to a bunch of white people before something else so graphic hits a minority character.

Kirkman!

It's been about 2 weeks since WD#46 came out. The first time I read it, I swore out loud. I never do that. It was at work, so my 4 and 5yr old kids didn't hear me. My work is my comic shop I opened a year ago, Hometown Comics in Edwardsville, IL (plug+plug) When I unload the weekly shipment for inventory before making them ready for sale, the only comic I stop what I'm doing to read is Walking Dead. I was angry after I read WD#46. I was angry at the Governor. Then I was angry at you. Then I got angry at myself for getting angry at a dadburn comic.

Seems like you might have some question issues.

No less than twice a month, I'm introducing WD to a new reader. 100% of those new readers are on board for the long haul. Thank you for creating a compelling read that gets me going. I did want to give a shout out to my old Collinsville, IL Walmart co-worker, Ron Ford (a B g WD Fan)...who STILL hasn't come by my new store. GET IN HERE, YA BASTICH!

Douglas Dial

Yeah, come on, old co-worker, Ron Ford! Get down to Douglas' store, HOMETOWN COMICS in Edwardsville, Illinois... I hear it's a totally sweet place to buy comics!

Dear zombie guy (lol)

Sorry about that, I love marvel zombies and I do so love your work blah blah I'm going straight to the questions, but know I love you

I guess there's been a lot of influences on TWD, like in Invincible. I was wondering what they are, for example in Invincible there is a character who resembles that guy from Watchmen, and have they had an impact on TWD. I don't mean to call you a copier but the question came up in my head when I read volume 5 and saw the drawing of Rick and Glenn spotting the helicopter like in the remake of dawn of the dead

This could be a coincidence, but I'm just asking. Anyways I love your work and I forgive you for the past few issues, they've been a little late as I've heard. I can't wait to find out who "dies" next

Your adoring fan,
Michael Olvera

I don't readily recall the scene from the Dawn remake that you're mentioning... but y'know, I have seen that movie at least twice, and I love it--it's a GREAT movie. But just because I had people seeing a helicopter... doesn't mean I was inspired by another instance of people seeing a helicopter and decided to steal the idea. To be honest... a helicopter passing overhead was a suggestion from a fellow writer whom I won't mention for fear of sounding to name-droppy. Originally I was going to get Rick and crew to Woodbury another way, but it wasn't very action packed. This fine fellow made the suggestion in passing and I moved forward with his blessing.

My point is, things happen any number of ways... and coming up with stuff is what I do for a living... it's not that hard... and it would take me more time to watch things and steal from it than it would for me to just make things up on the fly... so that's what I do.

I could have just as easily been stealing from Fantasy Island... or that one scene in that one movie where the characters look up at the sky... I mean, how could I possibly come up with the idea of two people looking up at the sky on my own?

Dear Kirkman,

Just wanted to let you know that issue #46 was outstanding. I know you have been getting a little flak from a few people lately in the letters column because they feel there hasn't been enough action in the comic recently. I used to run a role-playing game called All Flesh Must Be Eaten (I'm sure you've heard of it) with some friends of mine for about two years once a week, a continuing story, and the best game session we ever had was one where there was absolutely no action. I hadn't planned the game for that week, I had no idea what direction I wanted it to go in, and I just let the guys' characters move the story. The story just kind of created itself for the night, and it really allowed them to flesh out their characters a lot more, and we got some real development done with them. We all earned a lot about each other, our roleplaying skills, and the characters' background stories that night

Nerds.

Anyway, back to issue #46. I loved how, throughout most of the issue, there seemed to be a real sense of security and peace, even happiness. I really liked seeing the survivors feeling comfortable, even knowing what's going on outside the prison. One thing that I was a little upset about was the ending, the death of Tyreese. He was my favorite character, and he will be missed. I don't drink, but if I did I'd have a shot in his memory. However, even though I will miss him, I must say that you really wrote a spectacular death for him. I liked how, even though he knew it would probably be his last words, he still told the others not to listen to the governor. He was a hardcore tough guy till the very end. He knew that, even though he was about to die, he would not die in vain. Now that the other survivors have seen that sick bastard kill Tyreese, they will all probably be more stoic and determined to win this battle. Oh, and he's face it, chopping off someone's head with several swings of a machete? Grotesquely awesome. Just the kind of thing someone should expect from a comic book like The Walking Dead.

I take back the nerd thing.

In closing, thank you for the great story so far, and I'm looking forward to the final battle between the governor and his militia, and Rick and the survivors. I'll just have to find a new character to be my favorite. Glenn's pretty cool, but nothing bad has happened to him in a while, so I suppose he'll be zombie meat soon

Sincerely,
Dan Haskell

Glenn is pretty awesome... but y'know... he's not even in the book right now, he could already BE dead... and he is a minority character.

P.S. I've thought about this for quite a while, but never mentioned it until now. You ever notice how, on the cover of issue #28, with the way the right is grunting off that mask, it sort of looks like Boba Fett kicking a bunch of zombie bss?

Never noticed that--but maybe that's the reason I love that cover so much. I thought that original art right away... it's one of my favorites, and I love me some Boba Fett... hmmm.

Deadwalkers,

Yay for Axel and Patricia! Way to keep on with the good stuff of life -- in the bleak Walking Dead world, you've got to grab moments of happiness when you can. (I also dug Axel's "This place is my home." With a few panels and lines of dialogue, you enriched his character beyond a catchphrase, good work. Same for Billy, it was nice to see a little more of him -- he's a character I feel has sometimes just been in the background.

Lot of good it did them... sigh.

Then Tyreese. Ah, shit. I think my reactions matched Patricia's during that whole sequence. This was the guy who survived in a locked roomful of zombies by himself! I'll miss his strength, his humor, and the camaraderie he provided. I hope our gang makes a run to retrieve his body for burial.

Then Michonne -- yay! I hope she doesn't just shoot the Governor, though I doubt she would... she should make him (or his right-hand man there) tell the other villagers what's really been going on. Then she could let a zombie bite him, bring him back to the prison and chain him up, and everyone could poke him with sticks and stuff. How cool would it be to see Michonne reenacting her arrival at the prison, walking up with a jawless zombie Governor on a chain? Plus the other Woodbury residents could move into the prison, there'd be lots of new folks to garden and mingle with, (p us more sex partners) and everyone could live happily ever after until the aliens come. .

That would be an entertaining book...

One nit-picky thing -- sorry Charlie! -- but there's no way the Governor could see Michonne over his shoulder with no left eye. Oops! Let me make up for that by saying I've missed Charlie's art since "The X-Files", and his work here is leaps and bounds beyond that -- just beautiful and stark and frighten'g.

You've missed a lot of good stuff... too much to mention here, but White Death, CodeFlesh, Rock Bottom, Astronauts In Trouble, The Establishment and Savage are a good place to start.

About the pacing -- I love it. All those "talky" zombie-less issues let me feel like I can breathe. Thank god these characters occasionally get to rest! And just when I get lulled into a quieter state -- bam! Kirkman is back with a little of the old ultra-violence. And about the black and white -- love that too

Thanks for the zombie poop thoughts. No, really. I'm one of those readers who loves thinking about the details. I know you've said you're not going to go into why they never run out of bullets and batteries and stuff, but that's one of the things I love considering with apocalyptic fiction. What happens in a society, already suffering, when no-one alive knows how to make more light bulbs? Or when the sewer systems back up and the plumbing stops working? Or if Hershel dies and no one else really knows how to farm? "Y. The Last Man" has looked at topics like that and made it good fiction, maybe ten years from now (when maybe two years have passed for the characters?) you can explore some of the topics of long-term survival. I could imagine our gang eventually killing themselves for blowing up the gasoline supply at the military base. You should check out the book "The World Without Us" by Alan Weisman. It's not about zombies, but could provide some cool story thoughts, it's about what might happen to the planet and all of our man made stuff, if we were no longer here. . .

Some other things I'd like to see. crows and wild dogs picking at corpses, and some sea eons here and there. I can't remember if this has been brought up before, but if the zombies are continually rotting, wouldn't there be some skeletons by now? And no zombies with hats or glasses. I mean, if I can't keep MINE from falling off. . .

Whatever artistic decisions you make, TWD will always be the top comic on my monthly pile

--Dexter Midnight

You mentioned Charlie's name in your email... so he'll be sure to read this letter... and maybe he'll take some of your suggestions to heart. I think zombies with glasses look cool. More skeletons, though... I'll see what I can do.

Okay, another one down... next up, issue 50. WOO HOO!

See you then.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Well, here's issue 50, all over again.

It's crazy that we're making plans for issue 100 AS I TYPE THIS... guess that means sales stayed strong all these years

Retrospective congrats to the guys

Sine Grace

Okay, kids. That's issue 50. Issue 50. Fifty. Fifty. Half-way to issue one hundred.

Fifty damn issues.

Fifty.

I don't know, I'm a little awestruck to be honest. I'm not going to say I never thought we'd make it this far, because honestly, after the sales jump between issues 6 and 7 I kinda knew we'd be around for a good long while.

As for a little update on the strength of this book... this is by far the highest selling issue of the series, which is way cool and means we're pretty strong. That said, we got an unrealistic bump in sales for this issue because of our first ever variant cover by Erik Larsen and Ryan Ottley. So this issue really shouldn't count. But I've already got sales figures for issues 51 and 52 and I'm glad to report that issue 51 sold better than 49 and issue 52 is our highest selling issue yet, not counting issue 50.

So yeah, sales are still going up, little by little, every month. Even now.

Which I don't say to brag, I really don't. A lot of you weren't around in the early days of this series. Early on I would report on how the book was doing as a way of reassuring readers that the book wasn't going to get cancelled at any point in the near future. I know what it's like trying new books. Even if you love something and it's a great book-things don't catch on sometimes. It gets old after a while trying new things only to have the cancelled just when they start to get good.

It's frustrating.

That's why I let people know, this book is doing well, sales are strong... better than ever

And y'know, I don't think I'll ever be able to accurately convey just how thankful I am to each and every one of you for making this possible. I mean, I wouldn't be here if it weren't for you guys. All of you. I wish I could fly to all your houses and give you hugs. This book is a huge deal for me. I'm so grateful that you guys and gals enjoy it.

And I'm enjoying it, too. I love working on this series. I plan on sticking with this book for years and years. And a huge part of that is the people I get to work with. Charlie Adlard, Cliff Rathburn and Russ Wooten make this book an absolute joy to work on.

Charlie, Cliff and Russ know how much I love them, so I'm not going to bore anyone with lengthy thank yous. Instead, I'm going to dive right into the mail. I don't think this is the longest letters column ever (although it might be) but it's certainly the longest I've done recently.

So here we go!

Dear Cap'n Kirkman

Had no idea you had a beard! Or blond hair. That is you on the t-shirt in that ad, right? I must say that this issue was a bit more exciting than recently. If you don't get my mails regularly that's cause I don't get your issues on any kind of regular basis! Is Image Comic, ya know? I sense the big cliffhanger to mean someone's turning traitor? What else did I wanna say? Oh yeah. This was much more readable than that last issue ultra-typed "Dear" issue. The Long Road Home bunch of s---. Can't wait for the new status quo.

Sincerely

Andrew J. Shaw

Yes, that is me. I have blonde hair and a beard-although I will say I'm probably a slight bit chubbier than I appear in that drawing... sadly.

Dear Kirkman

Noice! I just finished issue 47 and the letter column. I am on pins and needles (not necessarily in that order) to see who is holding the gun to

Lori? My money is on Michonne. I think that will be a good little twist! I mean, we all know she is crazy but we don't know on which kind of crazy yet, so we'll think her motive would be Rick having left Tyreese dead. The only blow is how did she get back in the prison THAT fast without anybody knowing?

If it is Michonne. Thank God you waited till Black History month was over (That's a sarcasm)

Groan.

But back to 47. I wrote a while back and asked: "tinkin' out loud... if the Governor would be misled and/or crazy enough to compromise the fences he'd build it'd be a very consistent with him. He is a cut off your nose-to-please-your-face kinda guy. Or Michonne could cut it off for him.

I like books where people who you like (the "heroes") die. There will always be more people to like. "right" think we are at the point where... if not Rick-Rick's team dies. I think in a zombie/apocalyptic situation a lot of good people would die... unfairly or not is really just a judgment call.

One last thing a little business

If your readership starts to dwindle then you should let us readers know. We can do decide if it would be worth buying two copies and giving one away. That would have to reverse the cycle. First, plunk down what? 6 bucks to get the comic. Actually, over forward to and your sales go up. Then the person I give it to will, most likely enjoy it and then at start buying the series on a monthly basis, and then hopefully by start buying the trades and further living your pockets, which leads to c) we, who have been going for the ride from the beginning, get more Walking Dead.

Luckily, sales aren't dropping, and even if they did, our trade paperback sales are so high, we could sustain a pretty healthy drop without batting an eye. That said, there's no reason you can't

start buying two copies of each issue NOW. This book will never be selling TOO MUCH, so please, by all means, starting buying as many copies as you can in order to spread the word. I'd really appreciate it.

Just promise that you won't forget us. Let's be honest, "them" we could probably do without anyways, right?

Regards,

Dawson

PS. I know that it is hard to believe but they actually rejected me from taking Alan Greenspan's position when he bailed. Now who's laughing?

Not me.

Mr. Kirkman

I've been reading comics for many years but up until I picked up The Walking Dead I was never impressed enough to actually write in about them. Congratulations sir, you are my first letter (and will completely flip out and flame the issue if said letter is printed just because "in a word like that" haha)

Better go buy a frame!

Truth be told I was really getting bored with comic books and about to stop buying them all together. That all changed when I went into the comic shop and my eyes fell onto TWD volume 1. The whole cover with just the right amount of cover along with the black and white drawing with awesome artwork caught my eye almost immediately (not to mention it had zombies!). My first words were "whoa, what is this?" The comic shop owner went "Awesome series man, you've got to try it out." Keep in mind, was about to call it quits on comic books so I was skeptical but decided to take the gamble, handed over the 10 bucks and went on my way. On my way home I decided to throw through the book and I was hooked immediately. As soon as the train stopped, turned around and took another 30 minute ride back into downtown Chicago and bought all the other Walking Dead issues I could find.

The whole series is just a masterpiece in my eyes. The language and color reflect the world perfectly and you've shown that you're not afraid to put some lumps (or 600 marks) on the main characters.

You say "no one lives forever in this series" but you write it so well that we feel like we know the characters and understand them and then our jaw drops when one of them gets done. I know that when I "reap" got killed... was totally shocked and then was like "WHY? ROBERT? WHY??" Was I JUST LOST? "YES!" (I guess) when Alex went down. Those 2 were my favorites of the gang honestly. I just hope you spare Hershel a little more while living though... suspected with how things are going he's going to meet some untimely demise sooner rather than later. With that being said I think you can tell I think your book is AMAZING. It's got to find a book with good art, a solid story, and the ability to get you to care about the characters but you pull it off flawlessly.

Ok, when we gotten that off my chest and have a few questions that you hopefully have time to answer:

1) Are there any plans to have the rest of the gang meet up with some new people? I know a lot of readers are asking about Darius and Morgan but I'd be content with anyone since the current crew is getting knocked off pretty regularly.

There will always be new characters coming into the fold in this series from time to time. Just go online and look at the cover for issue 53. There's more on the way very soon.

2) Are there any plans for some other random Walking Dead goodies? I found a shirt at the comic shop and seen the poster on the back of the issue, was just wondering if there were any plans for other stuff such as action figures, etc. I'd happily put more of my money into your pocket for more stuff to put around my room.

If you go online to www.cameroonstudio.com you can see the loads of The Walking Dead busts and statues that sculptor extraordinaire Clayburn Moore is producing. They're totally awesome. There should be more things on the horizon as well.

That's about it. My apologies if this letter was too long or seemed to ramble (first time writer rambling) but, thank you, for taking the time to read it. Keep up the good work sir and remember you have a reader for as long as the series lasts!

Respectfully yours,

Fred S.

We're on track for forever right now. Keep those fingers crossed.

I love the book. You are the professional writer here but have a scene idea that always thought would be good for a zombie movie or comic. Sorry if you lose ALL the time.

Sigh.

Because society is shut down and everyone is hiding, there is no one to maintain the grass/weeds. The grass and weeds will grow tall.

This has been shown a few times in the book. We're on it.

Our survivors come to a playground or a field full of tall grass. No zombies in site. They start to venture through the field. Someone notices a out nose of some kind. 20-30 zombies that were lying in the field sit up at the same time. The survivors are now surrounded because they were careless. A sense of ease instantly turns into fright.

I'm sure we'll have a tall grass zombie at some point in this series.

Anyway I thought, would through it out there because I'll never make a movie or write a comic book, but would like to see it.

Thanks for reading. I'll do the same on a monthly basis.

Mike Grierman

Really? That's it... no questions? No comments? I shouldn't even print this letter.

Unco! All right, All right Kirkman. Let me up. Look at all this dirt! Man, you're ruthless. There are no working washing machines anymore remember? You made your point. It took Tyreese's death, but I'm finally convinced. Nobody is safe. On look, there goes Michonne! That woman is crazy. She is always muttering to herself and disappearing to play... one Ranger. I know you that evil smile of yours. She's going to go on him soon... and she'll say "Talk to me Simon, you can't do that." Oh. Yes you can. But we don't know anything about her past. Now that! Think about it. We don't know anything about anyone's past here beyond Rick and Lori. What's that? Not Andrea. You're not turning her into Zombie chow. I'll tell her and she's gonna shoot your ass and George Romero's ass too. What's that? Put up your dukes, pal. Those are fighting words and this time I'm going to kick your ass!

Vitor Rosario
Star -like

Michonne is still alive out there somewhere-although, when we'll see her next is anyone's guess.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Let me just tell you what a fantastic ride this has been with The Walking Dead. I've collected comics for years and have never needed the kind of "fix" that I need each time. Finish another issue of this amazing book, love the realism of the characters, and the idea that no one is safe. This has a true sense of what an apocalypse occurrence such as zombies infesting the earth might be like. The true horror is not entirely the zombies, but in the true nature of people, and what they are capable of doing in the name of survival.

I've been around from the beginning issue of The Walking Dead and feel compelled to write this time (issue 47) because this is the first time I feel emotionally drained from reading comics. Dude... am on the edge of my seat on every single panel of this issue, and last issue with Tyreese, WTF. LOL

Also want to apologize to Mr. Charlie Adlard. When he took over for Tony Moore way back when... was not originally happy with that, but Charlie, you know. Your art with Robert's writing makes this a very solid book and I'm glad you're on board.

do have one question for you. Is there any plans for spin-offs away from the current storyline (like in another part of the world), I think I read somewhere that you had said there isn't, but just wanted to make sure.

Anyway... keep up the good work. I'm a fan for life!

Sincerely
Jason Thompson

Yeah, I'm pretty against spin-offs in general. For invincible (my superhero book) that title has more characters than this one, believe it or now, and as a superhero title I think it's cool to have spin-offs, it works with the genre better. For this book, I kind of like the idea of people only needing to have issues 1 through 150 to have the whole story. There's no need to remember that a mini-series that's out there takes better between issues 45 and 46. It's all just one confusing story. I like it simple... I think it's the place that way.

Kirkman

Yes, another great issue with a nail-biting cliffhanger. It shocked me the Gov would ram the fence.

1. Wouldn't it seem to have over the prison intact?

Yes, but he decided that he wasn't going to GET the prison without tearing down part of the fence and in that moment he supposed it could be fixed later. He was a bit crazy, don't know if you noticed.

2. You stated in your letter column, "I've considered the gay couple thing."
a. Are you referring to the book, I'm sure I've read something?

I was referring to the book, I'm sure I've considered putting a gay couple in the series. I was actually going to make Martinez gay, until I remembered that I was planning to have Rick beat his wife to death... then I thought, probably not the best thing to do with your first prominent gay character. There will be more gay characters eventually... not just David and Andrew.

b. How would you explain your boyfriend to your dad once they were old enough to damn you, to hell?

Are you joking?

Axe, got dead. Damn it! I was looking forward to some character development, you follow me? So far that means two characters who've died after sex. You, suck, bastard!

It's just like Friday the 13th!

I'm glad Michonne didn't die... just realized after typing this that you'll kill her now. Let me see who will she have sex with before you, all her? Prediction: She'll have a threesome with Andrea and Dale and then have a dirt nap.

Oh crap...now I've got to rewrite this.

I want you to tell the Gov so bad! but that means keeping him around will make for some great stories.

Well, too late for that.

3. Do you have plans to have some characters experiment sexually (gay or bisexual)?

Carol would have done it in a minute if Lori had been up for it. There will be more of this type of thing eventually... or rather some of this type of thing... because there hasn't been much of any yet.

It would make sense for a new character or even some of the existing ones to sexually experiment. These are dire times, base instincts are a huge driving force.

I don't care what others say of TWD this title is not stale or treading water at all. Sht is always hitting the fan and about to hit the fan and spray everyone.

Sophex LX
Siden -OR

PS: Yes, Ikr is my full test name. Cambodian in the house!

Yay! Thanks for the kind words. Sophex.

Dear Kirkman,

You weren't kidding... no one is safe.

But why is it so hard for our beloved Carl to kill the Governor? At least his fat henchman finally bought it actually choosing when it happened? I couldn't stand that character. Such a waste-sss.

Poor Axe. I really liked him. I was happy for him when he finally got some. I also was hoping he would survive this ordeal so we could see him try to adjust to life outside the jail. Oh well.

I was very sorry to see Axel go as well... but that's life.

And please get rid of Lori. I really liked her at first but now she's just getting annoying. Have Rick raise the baby by himself. Well, with the help of Carl since he's missing a hand and all. That could make for some interesting stories. At the speed things are developing though, the baby would start walking around issue 500?

Can't wait to read the next issue and see what will happen to everybody.

Roch Vianoucourt

Heh... assume you've read 48 by now.

Dear greatest writer in the world or multi verse

Rick has no right here

chain saws look good on night hands

Will you ever put a chain saw on Rick right hand?

or something of that matter?

O if you ever do can he say "Groovy"

Chris Hanley
Chicago ill

This has not gotten old yet. Not even remotely

I am lying

Dear Mr. Kirkman

...at me just start off by saying that you are an evil bastard! The end of Walking Dead 847 had me literally yelling "NO DAMMIT NO!" That has got to be the WORST cliff-hanger... we ever read. You've got this really intense action-packed issue, the sht is seriously hitting the fan, and then you end it with an all purpose? AND THEN YOU DON'T SHOW WHO T-SHOTS GARY!

Why must you be so awesome?

I've got a family to support.

Your royal disgruntled fan,
David Baldwin

P.S. I hear you're coming to Emerald City Comic-Con in Seattle this year. Looking forward to it

I had a blast at the Emerald City Comic-con-it's a great show. I highly recommend it. I hope to see you all there next year!

Mr. Pickle,

So I picked up the 3rd hard cover of TWD having enjoyed the 1st 2 - I'm not a horror or zombie enthusiast but appreciate great storytelling (not just JOL Adlard. Ralithum: Woolon too right?)... couldn't wait any longer for what happened next so I bought issues 37-47 & now I'm up to date in what's been released & I've got some food for my thought!

Firstly, I will continue buying the individual issues - maybe as well as the HC's if I can afford to. So now I'm reading & paying for Astonishing World-man, Brit, Invincible & Ultimate X-men. Am missing anything?

Marvel: Zombies when it's coming out... and there's old trades like Capes and Tech Jacket that you should check out-but yeah, for the most part, I think you've got it all covered. Be on the lookout for Destroyer and Killzone from Marvel and myself in the future. And thanks for buying everything you rock

Secondly how are you so prolific? I appreciate any insight into how you write - usually well - on a variety of subjects without all the books failing regularly behind schedule

Some would argue that I am regularly behind schedule... and I am, a little. But I know, I write an issue and some change every week... and the change ends up being an extra script or two a month, so I write about 5 or 6 books a month... no big deal, right?

Thirdly, I'm finding a couple of recent events puzzling. Why didn't Michonne just kill the governor (deliberate small g) as you have successfully created a character I have no respect for having snuck up on him with an automatic weapon? Given their history, I expected her to take the opportunity. I find it hard to believe she'd not kill him just to get her sword back. Then Andrea messes Philo's phone? Not quite as accurate because of her injury? (see how I'm providing excuses for you?) I'd appreciate you... thinking though... "You've proven adept at killing important people" was surprised, horrified by how and said to see Tyreese go but then for the governor to keep surviving, you better have a HORRIBLE resolution for him in 48. Also, where are the pants in the denouement? Surely a few must have avoided being shot in the head and be trying to eat the Woodbury inmates/prisoners/defenders; especially now the fences are down? Anyway, that's a small amount of questions for the 23 consecutive TWD... we stayed up too late to read.

Okay, Michonne didn't kill gov right away because she knew she wouldn't make it out of that group alive if she just fired-they would have turned on her and shot her down-so she was going to take the Governor hostage and kill him later-but that went to hell too.

Andrea missed because no one is perfect. She hit him in the chest, from the tower-that's pretty damn close. A head shot would have been difficult at that distance for her-she's not a trained sniper... and she was injured.

Finally, Andrew J. Shaw... we should go a bit... is this a contractual obligation? Sorry if you explained this before I've been reading... after Rick's since issue 37

He writes bizarre letters that entertain me. It's pretty easy to get printed if you do that.

Finally, right now I'm liking Andrea best. DON'T kill her

Theodore Crush
Devon

Andrea's fate remains to be seen... so no promises but I will say that we do find out, one way or the other, very soon

P.S. You're reading XXXXombies right?

I haven't read all the issues yet, but I started it.

Hey KirkMan,

I've been meaning to write you to let you know what sort of reaction the current arc has wrought

With the first red label "No One is Safe" issue in hand and especially after the double cliffhanger... I literally could not bring myself to read it. You, had me so fixed with dread that I felt as if my real reading the book could save the cost from their fate. Never had that feeling before, only to have it resurface with the planets finale of The Wire so I thank you for that!

Well, finally read was far messier and more darkly comic than had anticipated. You did an excellent job of subverting and ultimately amplifying the threat of the Governor's crew by showing how they were. I couldn't help but smile as he kept ducking behind the logs... for me, shades of Spunky sneaking himself from spillobs in the "Hades" Romans' Courtyard... bit in The Nine Rascals

How old are you?

The net effect of best illustrated in Tyreese's beholding, where you don't allow the reader or the survivors the benefit of a clean shot. Reality is full of gristle and lardons and that's the sort of horror you've best captured so far

...coming forward to not wanting to read the ending. A quick prediction... does the bit of parks on the cover suggest that it's Michonne that has... and the baby at gunpoint?

It was supposed to be and it was supposed to be misleading.

...on other news, at the end of Marvel Zombies 2 you said something to the effect of hoping the readers enjoyed it as much as the original. While the story had a number of great premises, it didn't get for me as a complete story. I feel sure I could have been "Down" to MZ2 a "Night" if it had been paced out a little differently. The meat for me was the Rednecked Zombie heroes vs. Carter O'Quip. If the Civil War part had been 2 issues and you dropped the redundant and plot convenient "Jill fight, the minigame of Zombie Guts vs. Survivor Rage could have had the room to breathe. As it stands, the "Bite is a Hal" to be continued. "7 ending will forever damn the book to sequel status without allowing it to live on its own merits... just a thought!

Well, the first book ended with a "To be continued..." 7 also... I was just trying to keep in line with the first. Your opinions are heard loud and clear. Thanks for sharing.

Would you have paced it differently now that it's all said and done?

Thanks and Cheers,
Michael

Probably not. I like the Hulk thing. I like the way it ended. I don't think I would have changed much of anything. I'm pretty proud of Marvel Zombies 2

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I have never written a letter to a comic before, but with recent events in my life, I've felt compelled to. A week ago, I was diagnosed with bladder cancer and had a tumor removed. Being a healthy 40 year old male, this has shocked and humbled me on many levels. I just want to thank you, for the Walking Dead series. The terrific artistry and spectacular writing have allowed me to escape my health concerns... like Rick states in issue #47, "Just get over and we're right back!" We can get through this! This is what... plan on doing. Fighting back and beating cancer. I hope Rick continues to be a central figure in the comic. He exemplifies the human spirit and it's fighting nature. I would be saddened to see him leave the series but look forward to the current arc ending and the many changes it will bring. Thank you for giving me that monthly escape and look forward to reading his life for many years to come!

After reading this issue, I think you'll see that Rick isn't going anywhere just yet. He won't escape his lot—but it's only making him stronger. Best of luck to you in your upcoming fight. Please keep me posted on your successes.

Y'ur Fan
Kevin J. Zalkow

P.S. I just bought the hardback copy of Marvel Zombies. I can't wait to open its pages and enter a new Kirkman world. Keep up the great work!

I hope you enjoy it.

Fyfe

Dear Rick,
You killed Tyreese and it's just... ok. It's your story, it's your world. Even with all heroes dead (but still walking) and will be one of best comic. EVER. Still, it's a shame Tyreese died slowly, painfully, and without dignity from hands (in hand) of such a degenerate jerk.

That's just so cruel. Awwwww. cool. MAAAAAAAAAAAAAN. SO CRUEL.!!!!

I seems nobody needs zombies anymore. People were, and are will always be each other's greatest foes. :)

Take care
Rian

P.S. Who's this? Whose boots are these? Michonne?

P.S.S. Please reconsider rule "one hero dies every episode". Pleaseeeeeeeeee.

There was never a "one hero dies every episode" rule. That said, heroes are safe in this series for a little while at least. We haven't had a death in two issues and counting.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

You do not mind would like to ask you some questions. I'm very curious about the walking dead. I have looked all over for a better comic on zombies, and nothing has come close to your delightful gem yet highly addictive series. Answers the questions

1. Who is more like a pirate? Philp with his eye patch or Dale with his peg leg?

2. Peg Leg beats Eye Patch

Are we going to see zombie animals or are you following mark Brooks rule on that zombies can only be human

That's a Romero rule, right? Either way I follow it.

3. Do you ever put little "Easter eggs" inside issues, such as putting zombie celebrities or adding quotes from movies?

Burt Reynolds' mustache appears in every issue.

4. Are we ever going to see walking dead pets, or have you made them and I just couldn't find them?

I don't know what you're even talking about.

5. I'm guessing the outbreak in the story is not a virus, it's more of a 30 day, for originality any hints to what it is. I know (in the past) you've said you're not releasing that information anytime soon, but I figured I'd ask anyway

I'm not telling

For now that's all. I would like to say thank you for making a wonderful comic that is just as fun to read a second time, and many times after that. Also thanks for keeping the price minimal and not putting any of those annoying ads in between pages.

Can't wait for the next 50 issues
Michonne Olivera

P.S. Know that because of the extremely cliff hanger ending in issue 47 I've attempted to freeze myself and then have my friend thaw and revive me when 48 comes out.

How'd that work out for you?

Hi Mr Kirkman

I have been an avid reader of "Walking Dead" from issue 1. I have loved every twist and turn of the plots, even the ones that "really" piss you off!!! The reason for my letter is just to say you are really hitting the mark every month, and I just wanted to say I like watching your favorite zombie DVD getting to the end lines and reaching for your remote to stop and speed, only to see the screen turn black and the film starts up again! Every horror fan always wanted to see the "what next" and now we have it in episodes!!!! Keep up the good work on Evil and The Ascending Wolf-Man too!

Russell Wakefield

Thanks. That credits rolling and then the movie starting up again is a good way of thinking about it-I think I'm going to steal that.

Mr Kirkman

Thank you for 50 issues of excitement, fun, thrills and controversy. I really enjoy WD from cover to after credits, back. I even enjoy the ads, because I know this may be books' would also enjoy you made me buy Set of Red armor (series' great book box). I hope WD will go on many other 50 issues, so I'll continue to be one of the 1st books I read every month.

That's the plan

Oh, and I'm very excited. I'll start to show up in #75 for real!

Keep up the good work (and make Marvel Zombies an ongoing!)

-Andrew Guenther

It's funny that we're so close to issue 75 now. I mean, when I think that joke in the early issues, like I would run out of ideas and put aliens in the comic in issue 75. I didn't really know if we'd make it to issue 75, and it we did, it seemed like it would be so far off. Now it's just two years away--crazy. I

better start coming up with some alien races.

Hello Robert Kirkman,

Question: What is Robert Kirkman's favorite type of candy?

I'm not really into candy all that much. Can't say I have a favorite. Candy bars and stuff are all equally delicious, but I'm not one to seek them out very often.

First I want to say I enjoy The Walking Dead very much. Whenever it comes out, it is always the first book read. But I have a few complaints for you. In 2007 I stopped buying the book and sold all of my back issues. The only reason for this is the terrible release schedule. It is ruining the book for me, so much that I can't even myself going in the comic shop to purchase it anymore.

Cry me a river. We've got a better shipping schedule that about 56% of the comics out there. You're getting issue 60 at least four months shy of our 5th anniversary. The schedule isn't that bad, really--don't see what we're being compared to. Find another writer/art team that has done as many issues as Charlie and I in the same amount of time. I can think of maybe TWO. Our schedule isn't perfect... but it's really not THAT bad.

I always assume to be the first thing people talk about when a new issue comes out. The Walking Dead is becoming known for being ridiculous late. I'm not looking for any excuses or reasons here. I know it's more than most indie books, and this is lame, not DC or Marvel. I'm just telling you how that, for me, the schedule is really hurting my enjoyment of the series.

I'm not sure if it's bad writing, had art, the 2-3 month breaks in between some issues, or get a combination of all that. But even up to the current issue I have a very difficult time recognizing/memorizing some of these characters. And I know I'm not the only one having this problem, I have heard quite a few people complaining about this. For a book that focuses so much on the characters, I don't understand how this can be a problem so far along in the series.

It's not a problem for most, thankfully

That's all for now. I'll still keep on reading no matter what, I'll even be here when the aliens arrive at 75 and they have better!

JordanMB5

Answer: Tyreese's Pieces.

Oh you were being funny up there... and I went and actually answered the question.

So you're still reading that? That's cool. After issue 48, you shouldn't have much trouble telling the characters apart. So you should be okay. And y'know, despite me feeling that our schedule isn't all that bad, I really would like to get the book out 12 times a year... it's something I'm working toward. We'll see.

Dear Mr. Kirkman and Associates,

I have been reading your book since around issue 3 or so. I just finished reading issues 46 and 47. Just some background on me. I'm a black man from Jamaica who's a comic booker. A JS Citizen. I've read As you might imagine Tyreese's death shocked me as it did most of your other readers I'm sure. I didn't respond to the whole Michonne rape thing, basically because bad things happen to most of your characters. I don't see Michonne's rape as being any more horrible than Rick getting his forehead smashed in. Rick's Tyreese's death wasn't even a one or two panel deal. You had to show multiple panels of the Governor hacking away! Honestly seeing a character who has been present that long die in such a gruesome manner had a huge emotional impact. I guess that's a complaint to both your writing and your artistic team. Don't know if you know this, but I really much appreciate the fact that the first people to die in the "worst" fates are the black characters and the people having sex. Lo and behold, guess who the next two characters to die are? The black guy Tyreese, and Axel who just had some nookie that same issue.

Well, the Axel sex thing was because I wanted that character to appear to have some kind of relationship forming so his death would be all the more tragic--but maybe that's why the sex/death cliché exists.

As a minority, I don't see too many characters who look like me in comic books. So at first, I just kept pissed when Tyreese bought the train. After a while though, I actually saw that shot from Rick. There aren't too many other characters whose death would make that great of an emotional impact. You did kind of fall into "horror genre cliché, but I see now that Tyreese really was doomed from the arc began. There are numerous white characters who fall into gruesome fates throughout the series, so I really shouldn't expect any person whatsoever to escape harm. I'm glad that you actually wrote some believable black characters in the series, and I expect that the "crimes of this arc, and especially Tyreese, will have their deaths impact the survivors for quite some time. Tyreese was probably the closest thing to a brother that Rick had, so I look forward to seeing his impact on him.

Thanks for being so damn reasonable. Also, please take note that Tyreese is far from the last black character that will be introduced into the book. There's plenty more issues yet to come.

Coating thoughts, I can tell that Rick was freaked out in #47 when he saw expressed such a grim viewpoint. Think the effects of their really on the children really evaded Rick. Lori mentioned it a few times, but I don't think he understood what might happen. Kudos to you for starting down that road. I hope the mental effects of following generations are something that we as readers don't think about after BTW, how come there aren't no pregnant women?, guess the prison might have had condoms, but no-one brings up choosing not to have kids. How about seeing a conversation or two on this matter?

My only remaining nag anger about this whole arc is the knowledge that the governor won't be able to suffer as much as the survivors have because of him, or how much they will have to deal with their emotions in the aftermath. I would literally like to see him get tortured again, but for 2 or 3 arcs perhaps. Of course, I'm sure some of the characters feel the same way Michonne still doesn't know what happened to Tyreese so I await her reaction. I'm also waiting to see how some deals with the murdering of the Governors in the series, who are still alive. Some of them followed freely, but I'm sure some were intimidated or misled into following the orders. Kill them all, or will they try and integrate some of them to bolster their ranks?

The Governor's death was probably pretty painless--and he certainly didn't suffer as much as most have due to his actions... and that's unfair, but y'know, that's life.

I will continue to read your great book for as long as you keep up the great writing. By the way, I live in Atlanta, and we do have a sizable hispanic as well as a not insubstantial asian contingent. In the ties of racial equality, I look forward to seeing some of their bite in the dust in a horrific manner! Keep up the good work!

Nabaki Emberton

Hey, Martinez was beaten to death after being hit by an RV. That counts right?

Yo Mr Kirkman

I just read the final 7 volumes of the walking dead and HOLY GRAPE! At first, I thought it would just be like some of the other zombie movies out there. But man was I wrong. After catching up and reading all the rest of the issues, I'm happy to see Rick still kicking and Lori still taking care of the baby. But I saw what you called the latest issue and I'm bracing myself for someone major to die off, maybe Rick, maybe even Carl. Seeing Tyreese go down like a bad guy in his gut getting his head sliced was pretty cool. I just got a few quick questions.

1) Any chance we'll see the main characters get to another country? Maybe an Airport? That would be KICK ASS. How do you survive, where would you go, where would you land? What country would you know a safe?

Not a very big chance they'll make it to another country unless it's Canada or Mexico. There probably aren't a lot of pilots sitting around. We'll see.

Zi! Well we see how the government collapsed? Will we see a flashback to how the outbreak it began? What if the survivors found a news van or some tv station that has some kind of recording that makes them question their story or if they should continue on as they have?

It doesn't interest me, for the time being, to go back and show that early stuff. I may change my mind eventually.

3) Would you be willing to have someone do action figures/sketches of main characters of the series... could see a MICH/GNINE figure selling like crazy, maybe a Rick and an Andrea or Glenn or Hershel. All of them would be cool figures to collect. Think about it.

Todd McFarlane is thinking about it...

As always, keep up the great work, man. We all know you got a lot of other stuff with Ultimate X-Men and all (they offer fanzine of yours) but don't kill THE WALKING DEAD. It's a great book with great art, and you have some gripping stuff in it.

Can't wait to see issue 48, and I hope we see this book go to issue 100!!

Charles Fuchsel

You and me both, Charles. Although I did leave Ultimate X-Men recently, I can assure you that I don't plan on ever quitting The Walking Dead. I'd like to do 1000 issues.

Kirkman--

Awe! Awe! stuff

That's not a criticism, just saying, you really blew the roof off of the good thing our guys had going.

just put it down and I'm reading. I didn't expect quite so stark a break between we've been and where we were headed. And frankly I'm scared for Rick and Carl. That makes me kind of a pussy, doesn't it? I mean it's just a comic.

It kind of does, yeah.

Been meaning to write in regards to a couple of things

was crushed to see Tyreese killed, especially at the hands of the Governor. I thought this was going to be a comic about seasons crops and yearly harvests at the prison. What's going on??

How much would you THAT have been?

And I want to congratulate you, on having persevered long enough in the real opera to now be seeding influence on your peers, where at first you were plagued with uninformed questions about this life's opening (very black) where and its resemblance to 25 Days after. Now let the letters start rolling in on how much like TWO Romeros own Diary of the Dead seemed. Guys in an RV especially going from one location to the next. If only Romero had a literally enter column where you could send endless letters under your 'many pseudonyms and noms de letterist asking why he had to bile your style and couldn't come up with a story or his own. If you still haven't seen it yet (and to all of those who have) I have only this to say, "Hi. My name is Rickman."

Don't blame me for that movie!

No need to defend Romero's process - I'm just funny

I still love the man but Diary was not a good movie.

But really, man, you're a bastard with Lori and the baby. Talk about a double-switcheroo with the cover of the last issue - Lori and the baby in imminent peril - which was going to be an unrealized threat and then bringing it around to come to pass anyway. Crushing.

Please, alien invaders, come soon and take me -- I mean, Rick and Carl! -- from all this death and horror

Andrew Garosa-Price

Countdown to aliens, 25 issues.

Dear Kirkman,

What, no letter printed? I blame it on Scott Spenser's 4-pear (four letters in a row). Hmm, more like The R. more Dead the issue, huh? It was kind of exciting-the best issue of this I've read for ages. I actually liked the Guy not getting his brains blown out and stuff. So Rick's wife bought it, right? What about the baby? Again, quite exciting, looks better than the other comic I read today that Stephen King wrote. Shit...boy is that a waste of time, eh?

Andrew - Shaw

Thanks for explaining what you meant by "4-pear" it was a bit lost there. I read it in two letters and counting, now it's that's good. You should be happy I'm glad you liked issue 48.

Dear Mr Kirkman

You, Sir, are very good, the cliffhanger at the end of #47... I thought Lori was sure to die. Then in the issue #48 it's Alice trying to fix The Governor. I think I don't know who was going to die. Only to kill Carl and Judy a couple pages later I did not see that coming. Nor did I think The Governor was going to get what he deserved in this issue. How you come up with some of this who knows but it's great. This is the only book that I have to read as soon as I get home. I know you, Charlie and Cliff must get tired of hearing how great this book is. But I must tell you again. This IS ONE GREAT BOOK. cannot wait to see what's in store for the future.

Thanks for your time, Cary Shenh

Yeah, I'll be honest with you, things did change a bit in that arc while I was writing it—originally, Lori and Judy were going to die in 47, but then I moved things around and it got shoved into issue 48. Which, on one hand, made that cool twist with Alice possible, which resulted in the death being more of a surprise, but at the same time, it made it to where most of the deaths in this arc took place in one issue—which wasn't originally the plan.

Robert

I just read issue 48 and... is there anyone you not going to kill? By the way, thanks for signing all those books at A+ Comics.

Patrick Byrne

I draw the line at real people. I would never kill a real person. At least, I don't think I would. I look forward to seeing you again at A+ Comics in Lexington, KY real soon.

Wow

The "No One is Safe" storyline has been the best thing I've read so far for the year good 'n' evil takes a lot of balls to pretty much kill off the ENTIRE supporting cast. Every month for a crazy intense ride with these characters and every month it got only better. Can hardly wait to see where the new direction takes us. Keep up the great work you guys!

Duane Hand

Just wait until you see where we go next.

Kirkman

Just finished issue 48. You dick, you made my wife cry

Greg Wagner

Huh, that's not the first time I've made your wife cry. Oh come on—it was right there. You can hardly blame me, right? Right? Right? I'm going like I've had sex with her... that's funny right? The crying is a little odd, I know, but it happens. It's also an implication that my penis is unusually large, which makes it even funnier, right? And... uh... ISSUE FIFTY! WOOL!

Hey

don't really know what to say. I've been reading comics for 25 years and the walking dead issue one. Never written a letter to a comic before. Issue 48 was the most disturbing comic I have ever read in my life.

can't help thinking that Carl saved his father's life. I'm not sure if that's how you intended it in the script but that's how I read on the page.

Andrea also died? If yes, that would surprise me as I always picked her as a real survivor

Thanks (I think)

George Carbono

Andrea's tale has yet to be revealed, but we will learn very soon, I promise.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

just read TWO #48. Holy shit! Everything is different now.

Shocked,

John Kozelny

Well, not really. I still writing, Charlie's still drawing, Cliff's still telling and Rus is still lettering so, so really, the stories on a bit of a different path, but it's nothing crazy. It's just different enough to make things interesting.

Hey Kirkman,

haven't felt the need to write in since after I read issue 23, but I just read the big one. The BIG ONE. Number 48. I don't think so much has ever happened (or will ever happen) in a single issue. WOW! When you said no more was safe, wasn't expecting this. Some deaths didn't really take me, namely Alex and Patricia. Alex, though his I'm sure has never had much development, and as masters were taught to hate Patricia since she first entered the picture. Some deaths were sad, such as Billy and Herschel. I had hoped they would stick around, since recently Billy has really been fleshed out and as for Herschel, the guy just deserved a break. The baby/Carl combo wasn't sad—it was devastating and twisted. You have no idea how much hate mal you're going to get for killing a mother and her baby.

So far... not much really.

I think the final word for this issue is WOW! Usually I read Walking Dead, put it in my collection, and forget about it until next month. This issue, however, will stay with me forever. I have successfully scanned me for life. Kirkman, Wells, or myself to sleep, all I can do is hope that Dale, Andrea, and the twins made it out of the ordeal okay.

Thanks from a guy who can't decide whether he hates you or admires your courage in writing something like this.

Jackson Buckley

Here, let me help you... you admire my courage and think I'm very handsome and smart. Hating me wouldn't be very cool.

Mr. Kirkman

What can I say? I just finished issue forty-eight (twice) and have to congratulate you. Even though we all new people were going to die (probably in two days), still managed to shock with nearly every issue of this series. I like the way you're telling, proving it improves as this book goes on. In the nearly three years since I've returned to collecting comics (for which your book is responsible, as said in the letter you printed previously in #32) Walking Dead is the only one in which I haven't been disappointed at some time.

Even Inevitable which... love whole heartedly has annoyed me at times like now, feel that the book deserves a more mature interesting build-up to #50.

Well screw you! Seriously, though not interesting enough? Maybe. Personally, I think the stuff that comes AFTER issue 50 of inevitability is way cooler than anything before it—but the stuff before that, I think I should have to finish this stuff to take place... but enough about that book.

Sorry, I guess... perhaps I wouldn't feel a little set down in inevitability's build-up if Walking Dead's hasn't been so amazing. The covers, the deaths, the battle, the emotion, the deaths. I was legitimately saddened and angered when Tyreese was killed. I believe it's rare in the world of comics that readers actually have their emotions significantly altered by live comics they read. I mean did anyone actually care when Captain America was "killed"? But this issue has affected me even more. I mean... I don't even care about... on that much as a character, but when she was killed I felt it... had to pause at the page and absorb it. Great stuff. The same with Herschel, Billy and Alice, really saddening and powerful.

I stop gushing now: you want some numbered questions? I have a few

You can keep gushing if you want, oh, nevermind.

1) Is the comic going to be a little more like Inevitable, in that it's going to have a few different threads that are followed? As I looks now there are three different characters that need to be followed: Michonne, Dale and the RV crew and Rick and Carl. So... how will they all be dealt with?

You'll see as we move forward. I'm not really wanting to change the style the book has had so far and so far we haven't really had any transitions and subplots like that... so maybe there's your answer right there.

2) Or speaking of that... loved the rivalry against the governor and the woman. J-ly are you going to follow Woodbury folks too, or are we to assume she (and everyone else) was killed during the beautiful day two pages where their culprits can't die?

I'm not going to say they were all killed in that moment, but it's very unlikely that we'll ever see them again. The prison is dead to me. I've moved on and so have the characters.

Probably a dumb question that will have been answered by the time I would read an answer, but you typed in an earlier letters page about the Woodbury "doctor" who repaired the governor, and that he might be back.

He's probably still in Woodbury, pretty much alone, taking care of the Governor's "daughter."

3) Do you feel like you killed some of the characters without explaining enough about them, or too prematurely?? I don't mind that they are killed off for the sake of the story, but... wondered if you had regrets. Like with Axel, because he was awesome. Or... now you can't explain Herschel's strange outward religious tendencies, as you hinted would be built upon... etc.

I think I've done enough with Herschel for readers to fill in the blanks. He lost his wife and used that to strengthen his beliefs. It's all there, really. No need to really dwell on it. I would, liked to have done more with Axel as I think I liked him so much as readers did—but I felt it was unrealistic for him to die and... wanted it to get to Rick and Carl who made it out of there. I felt Alice too, and planned on doing more with her—but y'know... I had to kill SOMEONE.

4) You're basically making this all up as you go aren't you? I know that's not totally true but as it relates to my last question, you must decide to change things on the fly quite a bit, how do you do that and stay consistent with your overall vision for the story?

Well, I will admit that I've done maybe FIVE things since the beginning that were spur of the moment things I came up with on the fly. And at times they did derail the main story but I felt it was important to do them and be spontaneous. That said, it's only been five or so things, so it hasn't changed my big plan very much at all.

Alright... just read my questions and they kind of come off like I'm expecting a lecture... but you know, answer what you want.

Thank you, for an amazing read every month (or so) with not only Walking Dead, but Inevitable and the Wolfman as well.

Take care.

Adam Mitchell

You're welcome and thanks for reading

It's been a long time since I've written, but you might like to know I've never stopped reading

Like the Kirkman saga, still enjoying it immensely, but this is about Walking Dead 48

This fucking blew me out of the water. It was shit-piss-holy-death-murder-awesome-half-leathers amazing. I hurt every time someone died, so I hurt a lot. Even when the Governor died it hurt. In a book that centers around death so much, so far along in the story to feel each one and to make it count for something is a true accomplishment. I salute you, sir

Ryan Witah

Good to hear from you Ryan. I see you talking about my books on the Jinxworld forums, although, I really lower myself to the level needed to go to Bindsle. I see you been reading since the Battle Pope days--and so I'm glad to see I haven't alienated you yet--maybe soon though. I have's hoping.

CocoOOOoon, so that's what you meant when you said, "Nobody's safe"

Fred Chamberlain

Heh

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

First off TWD is the only comic I buy I have a standing order at the local comic store and consider your story the finest in zombie history

Nostalgia, holy fucking shit! Issues 48 made me want to barf, in the best way possible, I've never been so devastated by a COMIC BOOK. Lord read 'hunty' The way... see it, there's no way you can survive a shot like that, but it does seem possible that Judy might have made it. This bullet didn't seem to hit any vital part of the body. Thanks for that gruesome thought by the way.

...and the baby are dead! I promise. I'm not even trying to be coy about it and lie in the letters column. They are totally dead. The only reason you didn't see the blast blowing the baby in half is because I thought that would be in pretty poor taste. So yes, both dead--I promise.

Your story is incredibly well-written, I'm just worried that you're killing off characters faster than I can enjoy them. In Andria dies, you'll probably get another after from me

Uh-oh

Despite my emotional attachments, I think that this miserable, horrible act is only going to make the story better by forcing it in a completely different direction. No one REALLY wants to read a comic about people just hanging out made a prison right?

And if you kill Carl! I'll doubt the idea that Rick would even bother continuing to live. So thanks for your <ORRIBLE FUCKING APRIL FOOL'S JOKE (I was seriously upset)>

Heh, I'm sure most people don't even know what you're talking about.

Love,

Brian Lee Winterdratt

P.S. - Super Mario Galaxy rules. You're a genius

I'm a genius because I agree with you that Super Mario Galaxy is better than anything in this world?

Hey-Whatever, I'll take it.

Hi Mr Kirkman

I like your comic, and I have been read walking dead 48, but... YOU KILLED A BABY! oh my god YOU KILLED A BABY oh my god I got nothing else to say after I read this issue and feel like I'm about to cry YOU KILLED A BABY

ARIO MALVI

I'm a baby killer!

You went too far. Sorry I'm out

Rebecca Pierce

Well, that just hurts.

For the record, I wrote Rebecca back to get a more fleshed out response from her, and she ignored me. She's obviously pretty pissed

Caston Kink! (ok, sorry I HAD to say it)

I just picked up WD 48 today and HOLY CRAP!!! I have never been afraid to read an issue of a comic book before in my entire life before today. I was shocked as I started reading. This is my first letter so I have to tell you how much I love this book. Anyways, is the point? Now that the Gov and his presumed second in command are dead, who is in charge of Woodbury?

Nobody!

Where did Michonne go? Is she still alive? SO MANY QUESTIONS!!!

That you Michonne have the answers to by now! Yay!

Every month something new and crazy happens. Do you have any more zombie comics in the works? Anything new and exciting coming down the pipe with Marvel? Thanks for the great comics and keep up the good work!!!!

James Jackson

Wicrita fails Tux

I think I'm swearing off zombie comics for at least the rest of my life. The Walking Dead is it for me. Maybe another Marvel Zombies. eventually But for now... just this book. I'm already known as the zombie guy. Which, I shouldn't really complain about it, because zombies have been very good to me... but yeah.

P.S. I read in the letter backs that you haven't read World War Z yet after you read the book check out the book on CD, it has some really cool voice talent on it including heavy rainfall. great stuff!

I recently bought the book...and I'm going to read it soon, I hope. Or at least the first 80 pages or so.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

I have discovered The Walking Dead a few months ago. I first started reading the trades. I read volumes 5 & 6 and in one night, I just could not put them down. And then, I finished on the biggest cliffhanger yet. The general about to attack the prison. There was no way I stop myself to go I could wait several months for the next volume. So I switched to the ongoing issues.

HAHI! My plan worked!

Rarely has it happened that a comic delivered a genuine rush of emotions. From fear, to horror to sadness, to anger, to exhalation, and desecration. The biggest test is that it all happened in a single issue, which is astounding.

Fear, knowing how impossible the situation turned against our team of survivors. Honor, witnessing the gruesome death of Patricia, quickly followed those of Billy and Alice. And then, possibly one of the most shocking images in comic book history, a woman carrying a baby where both of them. I can't find words to describe this...unpeakable...indescribable... "Lovecraftian" would be almost accurate minus the tentacles just plain caused on that page. Simply shocked. Sadness, for both Rick and his son, and for her and her baby. And then the threat for revenge. I desperately wanted to see the Governor get his long deserved death. angrily read the following pages. Exhalation, goodbye Governor! And finally desecration for both Carl and Rick on the final pages.

Most comics (same goes for books and movies) rarely make you truly feel the emotions. You just know something sad or happy happened, and you don't really feel it. But with this issue, I did. I read it an hour and I still can't remember those feelings. Love I did recently after watching Pan's Labyrinth, or a few other truly powerful films.

Thank you, Mr. Kirkman. This massive story are closed on a bang, which was no less expected

Advised reader

Michel Quenier

PS. We are lucky that the Comic Code Authority is not around anymore. You would be banned for life (and beyond) from publishing anything

Yeah, that's totally true. If the Comic Code had any kind of real Authority I'd be screwed for sure. That would really suck. Thank god for the CBLF and the movement to fight censorship in general. This country has been through some scary times and I'm really benefiting from people who came before me and fought the good fight.

Mr. Kirkman

Just got done reading TWD #48. Wow. I mean it was clear there was going to be a big change, the prison was already running by losing it's fences, but this just felt epic on every level. I started off with an almost humorous moment in the midst of the chaos with Alice and Lori's plan to trick the enemy causing some confusion and momentary honor on Rick's behalf. Just enough to lull you into a false sense of security about the fate of those particular characters making their eventual demise all the more powerful.

...after, when they first started their run to safety in a classic, here fashion with bullets wizzing past, was just waiting for one to hit. Honestly, was expecting it to be Carl. I'd never let it be Lori and the baby, then saw the woman who had it turn on the Governor. Brilliant. And what's more, the bastard is really dead. Sure a lot of other people had to die for it to come about, but it was completely worth it. Well, it was mostly worth it.

So now we have Rick and Carl alone... well, Michonne should still be pretty close, right? Carl went to what happens in #49. While, can't see them having much trouble from the former Governor's group what with the convicts deserting upon him, the being TWD there's got to be more trouble ahead which is exactly why... love it! Eagerly counting the seconds until my comic book store opens with the next issue.

-Asia Sorenson

Glad you're digging it. Ask questions next time I'm only printing this because I think you're a girl--and I want to be kind to my female readers!

Robert Kirkman, you fucking asshole

You killed them! I can't believe you fucking did that. You are a malignant fucking star. I've been reading since #1, so I say I've become somewhat emotionally invested in this little yarn you're spinning. I was a bit confused when you put my characters in a fucking prison and kept them relatively safe for what... like 2 years??? And then you dropkick us all in our emotional nuts in one single fucking page.

You're a monster and I'm sure you will suffer for this.

Anyway, it was a great read. Keep up the good work.

Also, bum in hell, you sadistic little scrotal knid

Prater Hassett

Trust me, that's a hell... all the homeless people I've murdered will get me in there way faster than any story I've written in this series. Except the one where I killed that black dude--that one was way out of line

Robert Kirkman

First off, you are a bastard. A right mad bastard. I just finished reading issue #48 and one of the many things have to say is fuck Tux. Fuck On my god. That was fucking awesome! I just glad that you had the audacity to pull that off... love your book and its stuff like this latest act... hell, this latest scene that made me love it

I spent the past weekend reading issues #3-47. (I'm still looking for issues #1 and 2 sadly. Only found the book at issue 4) and I picked up #48 today. The way that #47 ended with a shotgun to the back of Lori's head, I went oh shit. I spent the next month trying to figure out who was behind her. I even theorized that somehow Michonne was going to off her as payback for Tyreese. I wouldn't put it past her because she's unbalanced as all hell. Only wish that she had played on that a bit more, her being unbalanced not her killing Lori. Love how you, Lord, me into a false sense of security with revealing the immediate threat was a ploy. I really should know better. I don't normally fall for half of my things. I think it's because somewhere even in my twisted mind of horror filled pile of gore, call a conscience. Infants seem to be the only ones that are of little from sudden violence, gruesome deaths. I hurt that you killed Lori and Judith, but I understand. I have my doubts that Judith is dead, but I'm not holding out hope. I'm glad the Governor bought the farm. The bad Michonne didn't do it, I'm not so sure to see everyone die. Politics. Baby Huggins and Alice as well as everyone else. Everything in service to the story I suppose. As you've stated previously, the world of TWD is a dangerous place, and no one is safe. Everyone is liable to die on the next panel. I thought we all were well learned that lesson when Otis said Carl was back when thought Carl did survive that little encounter.

...love your book. It's one of my favorite post-apocalyptic stories. The only two above TWD are Stephen King's The Stand and Richard Matheson's I am Legend. Robert you must read War of Wier Z. Just keep it up. I'm looking forward to whatever craziness you have planned next. I can't wait

Thank you

Wily Crays

World War Z, I'm on it. Not count! Michonne out just yet... I'll be delving into her unbalanced nature sooner or later... she won't be following those footprints forever you know

Hey, Kirkman

I'm a new reader. I just finished reading all 48 issues. Last night read issues 1-24, seriously had a fixgin nightmare. I just finished up to 47. Then I read issue 48. You have a sick twisted mind. So when does issue 49 come out?

-Matt

It came out in May--sorry for the delay

Dear Robert

July 14/5/09 8PM!! I'm not kidding about killing off people I have been following this comic since it came out and am not a huge comic fan but your letters ability make the characters walk talk and become real is... more than I have ever expected out of a comic. You guys have broken more than ten taboos since the first issue and this last one... wow. If I all just broke a big one. Killing off a mother and her new born child?? Holy Shit!!

You and your team are pulling out an amazing story each and every month... have been buying them at my local comic shop at the start of each month, or when they actually get there since issue #10. You amaze me and you guys do me up lol!

Well done sirs. I expect the shocks, the twists and the awesome to continue for some time

Great job
Ford

P.S. if you are able to answer this question with out the typical, "We wanted to shock our readers" please do why did you kill off nearly EVERYONE that we have come to care about since The Walking Dead started? Jesus you and your team have better characters planned. I can not see how Rick and his son can survive in a world with the Governor's followers [than God that twisted bastard is dead, or at least he should be now] after both of them and a world full of zombies. I really hope they make it and maybe some how. Rick's wife and his new born are not dead

They're totally completely dead-I promise. The reason they all died in 48 is because it was realistic to me that MOST people would die in that situation. I have comics and TV shows where things get REALLY hairy and then ONE guy dies. I think that sucks. So I kinda wanted to say "Oh man... the shit is hitting the fan" and then really REALLY deliver. So yeah, we just wanted to shock our readers.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

would just like to say issue 48 was exactly what I had hoped for. Although I must admit little Judith's demise shocked me. I will have some in the fact that Rick and Carl are alive and... alive. Great storytelling with this issue. With this, you managed to create a large number of comic characters... had developed a one for two but you did it in a way that can only make this book better and the surviving characters stronger. Great job.

Also while I have indeed received my first Walking Dead shirt as well as several zombie nini bust statues, I have yet to receive my Rick Grimes statue. I know I was ordered since I was working at the comic book store at the time and put the order in. Should I order a again?

My life dead keep waving
Adam Davis

The Walking Dead busts and statues are all made overseas, which unfortunately makes their release dates very loose. There are shipping and custom issues that can hold things up for a long time. They should be available now.

Kirkman

What. Car and Rick survive? You, pussy

Heh. Sorry about that.

Seriously though, #48 is top-notch and completely true to itself. You warned us no one is safe--you were very explicit about this. And after "I guess he thought it was figured." "Okay, I guess he's the one who dies so the rest of them won't." it reminds me of (and is a stark contrast to) the Vietnam Massacre in the 1980's, where we were told to believe that those X-men would die... only to find that that wasn't quite what Marvel said, they just implied it, and in the end it turned out to be just another marketing scam! Instant collector's item! Buy ten copies and stab em in Lucille!

Yeah--I really hate that about comics. If you're going to call it a massacre--make it a real massacre.

Dude, now we believe you. We didn't really but now we do.

Hands down, the best sequence in the series so far is the BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-CL-CK-CK-JACK-tatency sequence as...ally, and the others related into the prison. No words and we don't see what happens and we don't need to. The Woodburns come to the awful, sick realization that--not only have they been deceived by the Governor, not only have they been duped into committing atrocities--but now they're going to die because of it. The real-life parallels here aren't belittled. This is the stuff of horror. Well done, sir

Tim Moerman

Thank you very much, I'm glad you enjoyed it. I think I speak for all of us here at The Walking Dead central when I say that these past few issues have been the most fun we've had in a long long time

Damn Daaaaaasaaaaaasaaaaaam!

-- Neil Adams --

P.S. Keep up the great work!

P.S. I'm 42 years old and my mom is going to be very disappointed that I cussed not once but twice in a letter that might see publication. But hey, I know of no better way to sum up my thoughts on what may be the most hard-hitting issue of The Walking Dead's history

P.S.: My mom will get over it

Wow, Neil Adams--that's totally awesome. I'm a huge fan of your work. Thanks for writing in. Sorry about cussing in front of your mom.

Just when I felt cheated by the first panel in issue 48 you did the unthinkable

You got a big set of balls and you know how to use them

Kudos to you -- baby killer

Mark Treisel

Yay--I much prefer "Baby Killer" to "The Zombie Guy."

Dear Mr Kirkman,

I own Xyz Of Comics in Las Vegas NV. I have been reading your walking dead series since day one. I have never been so furious with the ending of a comic to write in as I have, you have finally broke the mold. I'm still in shock as to how issue #48 ended. Not only did you manage to slaughter all of your characters through the book but you have also done it in such a fashion that all I can do is think about these fictional characters and feel as if I have lost something. I want go as far as to say I think of these characters as REAL, Human Beings. But for the first time I must say a comic book has hit me to the extent of calling up my wife and she needs the walking dead and is on Trade #3 and telling her how you killed everyone including Rick's new born baby and his wife. At first, I felt angry at you for destroying all that we have built up so far, long, even went to the extent of yelling out LOUD "Fuck this! It's not going to read this mother fucking book any more!" Now that all that day has gone by and I have time to think, I realize I was wrong. You know you get a lot of fans that love your work but... NEEDED to thank you, for giving me something that... have never felt from a comic book before, a personal overwhelming amount of Fear, Sadness, Anger

Laughter and Love. You have made me fall in love with comics all over again. Thank you Mr Kirkman for all the time that you have put into your work. It shows that you are truly a master. And by the way did you have to kill the baby???

Krypt Of Comics
Las Vegas NV 89146
702-477-2655
Benjamin Lublin

Yes I had to kill the baby. Sorry. I really appreciate the kind words you've got here. It means a lot to me to see this book affect people that way so thanks for sharing. In return, I'm printing your store's contact info. People--if you're in Vegas, buy some comics from Benjamin here

Hello,
My name is Bob Ficarra, owner of Metro Entertainment, a comic shop in Santa Barbara, California

First off, your book is great! absolutely the #1 comic read the week it ships.

However, the specific reason for my email is I collect original art from my favorite books- please point me in the right direction

Thankst
Bob

P.S. How about doing a signing in Santa Barbara?

First off--all original art from this series can be purchased at
www.splashpage.com

Second--I really just don't have time to do store signings these days. I do local ones, because that's easy. But traveling for them is a pain and I can see more people at a con, so for the most part, I just don't do them.

Dear K/rkman

Ahight, you got me. I've been lying for the longest time to switch to reading this book in trades to save money. But after issue 48, I'm in this for the long haul and I'm not coming back.

Ever since you convinced me personally, a Wizard World Chicago a few years back) to try this book out, it has been one of the most engaging things. I've ever read and it hasn't let up. have to say that Walking Dead is one of the most emotionally brutal things I've ever read. If for any reason, could only buy one book a month, it would probably have to be "The Walking Dead." can't wait to see what's next.

apologize for the massive amount of praise I've dealt here but seriously, this book deserves it.

Brian Keamey

Thanks, sir. I hope to one day make it back to Wizard World Chicago, it was my first con, and I want to be there for like three or four years in a row--and then stopped. I haven't been in years--but someday, I'll return. It's usually a great show.

Dear Mr. Robert Kirkman

You've killed off most of them. You've even killed a baby

And that's just amazing

Where it usually ends in most movies, or even novels, it's just another beginning in the sprawling, cutting edge that is Walking Dead. I can't imagine anyone else taking this huge a risk with their characters and the just proves that you, Mr. Kirkman, never take the easy way out, and that means everything to us, your readers. Sure, there are enough compelling story lines out there but nothing this challenging.

And that's what I love most about Walking Dead. I get a feel where the stories are going but then, tell myself that, no, he would never come. And you do that. And I watch... still a gritty suspense which comes out a guy gasp, and get my heart broken

But only issue 48 had me do all of them. All at the same time

And I thank you for that

Thor Balaban

I usually don't print letters that are just blind praise, as much as I like them--but your first name is THOR so you get a pass.

Kirkland Rafterion

The emotion for sadness doesn't even come close but I type it anyway. I don't think they could invent an emotion to describe what I'm feeling after reading #48 tonight.

Patricia, Billy, Alice, Loni, Judy, Hershel, The Governor. Total suffering carnage

Numbered questions commencing "last"

1) Is Judy really dead? mean, gone all over the place sure. And she wasn't crying. But maybe the woman was wrong and just don't check.

It's probably best if she is gone with the biles around and no one there to care for her but... Being a really new dad like you, first, when children are depicted being hurt in any way, cringe. Watched "Doomsday" and had a hard time getting through that first scene with my heroine as a young girl. Sheshe

I'm with you on Doomsday--that first scene was rough. Judith died a quick and painless death--and yknow, in this book she's probably better off dead.

2) I think that panel with Judy's arm sticking up from underneath her mother's lifeless body and Lon slapping at the reader is probably the saddest/goddamned thing I've ever seen in a comic book EVER. Admittedly, my heart out this issue and fed it to the roasters.

I WROTE that panel and when the page came in I still got a little choked up. That panel is just DAMN unsettling. I mean--it's hard to look at. Charlie did an amazing job on this issue... simply amazing. I couldn't have pictured things turning out better.

3) I LOVED the splash page with the BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! CLICK! CLICK! Makes you wonder

This isn't a question! Wait--neither was the last one. What gives

4) I DO NOT love the ad for next issue with Rick's unseen face. He's gotta be shell shocked about his wife and daughter but is he SHAMBLING on that picture? He's SHAMBLING, isn't he????? "Everything is different now." Indeed.

Well, as you can see in this issue--he's NOT a zombie.

5) Issue 48 had 12 letters printed from a fellow named Scott Spencer. Is he trying to outdo Andrew... Shaw (who I'm sure has the record of most letters printed in TWO)??

He holds the record now for most letters printed in one issue--that's for sure.

6) OMG, are Scott Spencer and Andrew... Shaw a fact the SAME PERSON????

They aren't. They type completely differently. Scott doesn't use punctuation or capitalization AT ALL--it's really a pain to reformat his letters to make them readable. And Andrew is always short and to the point--like disheartening, bitter point.

7) Hope you enjoyed my benevolent use of ellipses () in this letter!!! All for the love of the apostrophe

Keep the dream alive.

8) I hope you liked how I forgot to post out on page 2 of #48 the sudden yet brief reappearance of Rick's severed hand

That is CLEARLY Carl's hand. I don't know what YOU'RE seeing

Oh, and one favor to ask if you happen to get seller Amanda Maynard's address let me know. Sounds like her parody/art/zombie sanctuary has room for at LEAST a few more people

magas is it
Dan "Kentucky" Bemmglied

Yeah, you're just interested in her ROOM--sure.

And that does it for letters in this--our fiftieth issue. Here's to another fifty... and then another... and then another

Hopefully we'll make it to 100 in less time.

See you back here very soon for issue 51.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hi Readers,

Still hot off the heels of issue 50, here's a vintage interview with Robert, Charlie, and Eric Stephenson.

Enjoy,

Sina Grace

Okay, folks... I'm knee deep in convention season and have very little time to read and respond to mail — so I've asked and the fine folks at www.comicbookresources.com have been gracious enough to allow me to run the interviews that they did with myself, Charlie Adlard, and Eric Stephenson in celebration of the release of *The Walking Dead* 50.

They were conducted by Michael Patrick Sullivan and ran on the Comic Book Resources website over at www.comicbookresources.com or www.cbr.cc if you prefer something shorter.

You should visit their site — they're way cool. Okay — here goes.

ROBERT KIRKMAN INTERVIEW:

Robert Kirkman began his comics career by publishing his own work through the label of Funk-O-Tron. The most notable of this output was the infamous title "Battle Pope." His success there soon led Kirkman to bigger things like a four-issue "SuperPatriot" miniseries for Image Comics, which in turn led him to shutter his own publishing house and put out his own creator-owned projects through Image. In early 2003, Kirkman launched the superhero title, "Invincible," garnering both critical and popular acclaim. Kirkman then followed up on that success with something quite different, a black and white character drama set against a zombie apocalypse called "The Walking Dead," consistently the best-selling black and white title on the stands.

As "The Walking Dead" counts down to its milestone fiftieth issue, Kirkman sat down with CBR new to discuss the fan-favorite work.

"Rick Grimes is arguably the main character," Kirkman said of his "Walking Dead" cast. "He's the only character who's been in every issue so far...and he's the only character we've really focused on at all times. For the time being at least, 'The Walking Dead' is his story. He's a small town police officer whose life has been turned upside down by this zombie apocalypse business. He's got a young son, named Carl who will be taking a more active roll in the book starting with issue 50.

"There are a lot of characters for people to get to know in the book and they come and go as characters die off and new characters are encountered. This book has amassed quite a body count over its 50-issue run."

"There are aspects of different people here and there in the characters," Kirkman said of the basis for the large, though individually distinct cast, whose diversity and lifelikeness have made the book startlingly believable despite

its fantastical premise. "A lot of different characters have aspects of my personality, I think, but for the most part, I'm just making people up. Not one character is exclusively based on one person. Except for The Governor, who is exactly like Joe Quesada. They are literally exactly the same."

As readers have learned, no one is safe in "The Walking Dead." The book has seen a great many characters leave its pages, including some popular, well-liked ones. Kirkman said, though, that it doesn't get harder to make the death toll climb, no matter who it may be. "There have been times where I've held off on killing people because I didn't think they had become established enough. It's more fun to kill the characters that I'll miss. That has more impact. I've never killed off a character just to kill someone in an issue.

"For the most part, most people die because that's what would realistically happen. I recently killed off a big chunk of characters, not to shock people or shake the book up... but because a situation had arisen in the book where it would logically, be very hard to survive."

Despite their penchant for ending up six feet under, sometimes the characters spring to life in ways that even their creator doesn't expect. Said Kirkman, "There was a point in issue #18, I believe, where right up to the last minute Lori and Rick were plotted to get into a big argument and decide to split up. That was the plan for them since the beginning of the series. I was writing the pages and I was trying to steer the dialogue to where the plot needed it to go. I'd type Rick saying something and then Lori reacting and vice versa and I just could not get them to a place where splitting up was logical. It was like I wanted two people to break up--and they started being rational and agreeable to each other right in front of my eyes... and the scene came to a close with them still together. Weird stuff."

With such a large cast and in a seemingly constant state of flux, as characters die and new ones come onto the scene, some readers wonder whether Kirkman regrets populating "The Walking Dead" with so many substantive characters.

"At times, yeah, I wish there were less characters in the book," Kirkman confessed, "but really that's the nature of this kind of book. The characters live in a very dangerous world. If there were less of them the book would be over by now. I need to inject new blood into the book from time to time. And it's fun dealing with all the different personalities and points of view. So sometimes it's frustrating but for the most part, it's exactly what makes 'The Walking Dead' the book it is."

With such challenges, "The Walking Dead" is an ambitious book that sometimes seems to make its own decisions. Said the writer, "I've had a pretty loose plan that I've followed up to this point that I had worked out before I pitched the series. I had planned for them to arrive at the prison at the end of issue #7—not issue #12. I knew Michonne [a mysterious, katana-wielding woman] was going to show up with the two zombies in leashes, but I didn't know that would be issue #19. So things changed along the way. I always planned on them getting into a battle with another well-established group of survivors, but Woodbury and The Governor specifically came to me as I wrote the series. But

the main points of the book were all in place at the start of the series. There are a few bits left that I haven't gotten to yet. I had big plans when we started this series."

Kirkman still has big plans. "Once we hit issue #12 or so, and it was clear that we'd be around for a while, my mind just sort of exploded with possibilities. So at this point, I've got a roadmap that could take us to issue #300, assuming the readers want us around that long. Now, that doesn't mean I know what happens in the next 250 issues, that would be absurd, but I've got, like, ten or so big landmark events and getting to them and setting them up has a lot of little specific things that have to happen, so I don't know what issue things will fall in or even what order some of the things will happen in, but it's all just a matter of plugging in the events and working toward them."

While Kirkman has adopted a longer view of the series, it's not an infinite view. "I think the book is destined to end at some point," Kirkman confirmed. "Nothing lasts forever, and I don't see this as a 'Spider-Man-like' series that I would pass on to someone else at some point."

"Also, who knows... sales could tank at any moment and I'd have to end the book. It's unlikely but who knows when I'll say, 'this book is more popular than Jesus and turn the whole fan base against us."

"I really, really enjoy writing this book and all I've ever wanted out of my comics career is the opportunity to write a long issue-spanning story that I control 100%, so ending that seems foolish to me. If I ever saw that I was writing on co-pilot or not enjoying things or if readers were really hating the book, I'd do us all a favor and put a stop to it. Right now I feel like I could write this book for the rest of my life and be completely happy."

As the series has grown, so has Kirkman's storytelling. "I like to think I'm a better writer now and that I consider certain angles that I hadn't or wouldn't have back then," he said. "Who knows? I certainly don't see a significant difference in my writing but I'm sure there is. I think I'm more critical of my work now. I second-guess myself a bit more now than I used to, which is something I hate because it slows down the process a bit. I used to just lay out the ideas and keep moving, but now I examine, consider other angles, I'm doing things now that I probably should have been doing all along."

With that in mind, there is a type of story that Kirkman has yet to depict in "The Walking Dead's" pages, aside from the social, political, dramatic, comedic and horrific tales he tells from month to month. "I think it would be neat if there was a stretch of the book that was more action-oriented," the writer said, "but only if it occurred naturally. It's all about the characters at this point. I just go where they take me."

More than just Kirkman's writing has grown since the series began in 2003. "I've grown a lot as a person since I started this book," said the writer. "I'm almost 30 now, I have a son. My personal life is completely different. When I started this book I didn't have two nickels to rub together. Now I have many nickels, enough nickels. To say this series changed my life completely would not be an overstatement. My career would certainly not be where it is today without this book."

Over the last five years, "The Walking Dead" has amassed a devoted following. "It's very odd. I've talked to other creators about this, but we seek out the negative comments," the writer explained. "I'll go to a message board and skim positive messages about a given issue and then the one I read is the one that starts with 'This book sucks' or 'I quit.' We all do it, I think. It's like the negative feedback is all that matters. I print a lot of mail in 'The Walking Dead,' but a sure-fire way to get printed is to send me a critical letter. I can't do anything with 'I love this book' other than say 'thanks,' so I don't print a lot of those. I actually enjoy the little bit of negative response I get—as long as it's intelligent and not just 'This book needs more nudity and/or gore' or 'Please put out the book in color.' I could do without those."

Added Kirkman, "I think, like most creators today, there's a pretty open line of communication with the fans and myself. I'm super easy to get in touch with and I actually to respond."

Sometimes, with genre fans, there comes a point where they take ownership of the characters they love and become more

possessive of them and, in turn more critical about how they're handled by those whose actual job it is to tell the story. With "The Walking Dead" hitting fifty issues, Kirkman has seen little of this syndrome.

"Not so much, thankfully," said the writer. "I know what you're talking about though, and it's always been kind of funny to me. Everyone in comics gets so bent out of shape about characters acting 'in-character.' Now, yes, Thor would probably never rape someone and Spider-Man wouldn't rob a bank. That makes sense. But if I had Rick cut off his son's head in the next issue, that would seem way out of character, but humans—are y'know, living breathing creatures who sometimes snap, flip out—and whatever. I never show you what Rick is thinking. For all readers know, Rick has been planning on cutting Carl's head off for years. People don't always act consistently with their inner selves and people, on average, do keep a lot of emotions hidden, for whatever reason. Frankly, anyone is capable of anything, and as long as the story is told well, abrupt changes in a person's behavior is quite realistic."

With a solid fanbase and now a solid history both in sales and story, now is the time that "The Walking Dead" would be primed to move beyond its own monthly pages. But don't hold your breath. Kirkman has earned lots of attention from Hollywood regarding his zombie epic, "but I'm not going to take a deal just to take a deal," he said.

"My creator-owned work is very close to my heart and I'm lucky enough to not really need option money to survive, so I'm waiting for the right deal to come along. I don't want to just farm this thing out. I only want to do it if it's going to result in something good. I will say we came really close once and I was very excited, but this isn't horse shoes or hand grenades, so close doesn't count."

Nor is Kirkman about to start expanding out the series into a comics empire. "I think that's the mistake books make when they become as successful as 'The Walking Dead.' If I did a second series, it would make money—yes, it would be an instant success but how long would it last? I think dividing readers focus is a short-term cash-grab and a long-term detriment to the success of the book. If readers suddenly need to buy two books to get the whole story and they have to keep track of the order things occur in and things get more complicated, it weakens the integrity of the comic. Right now if you want to read 'The Walking Dead,' all you need is issues one through whatever-issue-just-came-out. Those are collected in trade paperback and hardcover to help you along—but you only need point A to point B. You don't have to know that 'The Walking Dead: Fire Bad' issues one to six take place between issues 46 and 47. If I was only in this to make money, I'd do three 'Walking Dead' series. There'd be tons of books carrying that brand, but I'm really here to tell my story, and I recognize how lucky I am to get to do that. I'm not going to do anything to mess that up."

While a milestone like the series' fiftieth issue inspires a lot of looking back, Kirkman's also looked toward the future, both in the book and for the book. "There's a dramatic shift in the book starting with issue 48," said Kirkman. "I actually don't like talking about what's coming up in the book at all—because we've done a good job thus far of keeping things a secret and the book doesn't seem to have to telegraph upcoming big events to sell well. So things are changing a bit, and if you've read the issue you know what I mean. I will say—the characters are out of the prison. Things are more dangerous and the book is going in new directions it hasn't gone in before. We're all very excited."

Kirkman did drop one hint. "Charlie Adlard going to be drawing more buildings very soon."

"In the real world, [there will be] more issues, more trade paperbacks and more hardcovers," Kirkman continued. "The Book Four Hardcover containing issues #37-48 will be out this year, and our second deluxe hardcover, sometimes referred to as an Omnibus, containing issues #25-48 will also be out in time for Christmas this year."

"In other news, I'm committed to getting the book out on a perfect schedule. I don't like to apologize for our schedule. We've gotten to issue 50 six months shy of five years,

so I think we're doing phenomenally well for an independent series basically because has there ever been another comic that's done that? Maybe 'Cerebus,' but what other independent book has made it to #50, let alone done it in such a short amount of time. That said, there's no reason we couldn't have reached issue #50 in month #50, so that's what I'm working toward; shipping the book even better than we have been. I do feel like we owe it to the fans and retailers who've made this possible. The least we can do is get them the book on a regular schedule."

Since "The Walking Dead" debuted, zombies have become something of a cultural meme and have seen resurgence in virtually all forms of entertainment media, and Kirkman thinks they're here to stay. "I think zombies have risen to the level of vampires and werewolves and will always be a staple of popular fiction -- with highs and lows like vampires and werewolves experience -- but I think they'll always be around in some form or another and I honestly wouldn't have it any other way."

CHARLIE ADLARD INTERVIEW:

Cartoonist Charlie Adlard is a comics veteran who began his career in his native Britain on titles like "White Death" with Robbie Morrison and Judge Dredd in "2000 AD." American readers first saw his shadowy style in Topps' "The X-Files" comics series in the mid-nineties and in "Astronauts in Trouble," the critically acclaimed flagship title from AIT/Planet Lar. After a several years of work-for-hire for many of the major publishers, Adlard found himself with a steady gig on a new and, as fortune would have it, hugely popular creator-owned title, "The Walking Dead," written by Robert Kirkman and published by Image Comics.

In recognition of the book's milestone fiftieth issue, CBR spoke this week with writer Robert Kirkman and now Charlie Adlard sits down with us to talk about his work on the last four years of "The Walking Dead."

For the unfamiliar, "The Walking Dead," follows an ensemble cast as they try to survive a world that has faced a zombie apocalypse. A stark black and white comic, "The Walking Dead" has captured the imaginations of readers with its socio-political undertones and a focus on realistic human drama over creeps and gore.

"It's not a zombie comic," Charlie Adlard told CBR News. "We wouldn't have lasted fifty issues if it was just a zombie comic. It's a character book and it's about the characters and how they survive in an extreme situation. It's more akin to things like, for want of a better word, 'Lost,' the TV show. It's about people surviving in an alien environment. It just so happens that 'Lost' has an island and ours is a zombie holocaust."

Adlard continued, "The general public are aware there's a sort of zombie revival going on and as soon as you say it's a zombie book, I think a lot of people actually get a little put off by that because, you know what differentiates ours from any other zombie book."

Looking back on the series and its large and mostly deceased cast of characters, Adlard of course has his favorites. "Well, Robert's killed most of them," the artist laughed. "Actually one of my favorite characters is still alive, that's Michonne, so that's cool, but I didn't realize until after issue #48 that he'd killed all the characters that I'd actually created, apart from Michonne, because all the other characters surviving to now are from the beginning of the book. I know that's not intentional at all. It's just the way it happens."

"I do have a bigger connection with Michonne because I've been with her right from the beginning. It's nice that Robert gave me just the one," Adlard laughed again. "One left over to hang on to. Hopefully she'll be back again, but there's heaps more new characters coming in. Hopefully he won't kill them off as quickly as some of the others."

Adlard tries not to get too involved with Kirkman's side of the book. "I let him do the writing and he lets me do the artwork," he said. "Occasionally, when we have a conversation on the phone, we'll start talking about what he's planning. I leave him to do what he's good at. I'm not good at that, so most of the time I think, 'you're the professional.'"

"Also, I quite like to read the scripts as they come in and be surprised like a reader is," Adlard added, "so I don't really ask that many questions. It's all right to read them and go 'oh, okay. That's cool.'"

However, being so closely involved with the book means some fore knowledge of events, but even then, surprises lurk in the script pages. Said Adlard, "I know really, really roughly what's going to be happening in the bigger arc. There, again, what he's told me three months ago has probably changed. There were a couple of deaths in issue #48 that I didn't realize he was planning, for instance. So that was as much of a surprise to me as to the readers when I read the script."

Those surprises translate into the highly emotive and fresh artwork, for which Adlard has won much praise. "It makes it fresher for me as well. If I knew every tiny detail as it was coming, I don't think I'd enjoy drawing it as much, because I'm reading it and then I'm drawing it virtually immediately which gives me that sort of excitement."

Keeping himself in the dark about the future of the storylines is just one part of what makes up Adlard's take on the zombie-ridden world of "The Walking Dead." "It's kind of interesting, my art style, because I don't have different styles, but I have different ways of drawing," the artist explained. "I don't change my style radically to suit a story, but I might change, say, equipment or something. Use something like a different sort of pen or brush for a certain story or book I'm doing. It gives it a different edge."

"With 'The Walking Dead,' I do it very quickly. The reason I did it quickly to begin with was that the first issue I had to do had to be done in two weeks. To Image and Robert's credit, they said 'It has to be done in two weeks, but please, please, please, if you can't do it in two weeks, don't worry.' I thought to myself 'No, I'll set myself a challenge. I'll do it in two weeks.' And I did kind of get it done in two weeks, so that sort of established the look."

Adlard continued, "Over the years that I've been drawing it, the quickness has worked in its favor, I think. Because it's a horror book, I think that the sort of sketchier approach that I use for it is more edgy, more angular. It's not so refined, giving it that slicker, more super-heroic look, perhaps. Because it's scratchier, it gives it that grit that more associated with harder-edged sort of stuff. So it's not just me thinking 'I've got to get the book done. Get it quickly. Get it out.' It's something that works with it."

In discussing the origins of the quick-style Adlard employs, he thought back to how he got the "Walking Dead" gig in the first place. "I knew Robert very, very vaguely," he said. "I did a book with Joe Casey, called 'Codeflesh,' for Image. The last three issues weren't actually done by Image, they were done by Robert when he was doing Funk-O-Tron [Kirkman's now-defunct publishing house], publishing 'Battie Pope.' He really liked the series and offered to publish the last three episodes. So he put them out and after that I didn't really hear from him at all until one day, I got an email out of the blue. The email actually started off with 'Do you want to earn money?'"

"Obviously he knew that 'The Walking Dead' already was doing well enough to guarantee a certain amount of money. That was sort of his 'in' with me. Luckily, he just got me when I was in, shall we say a 'low period' and looking for work. I had something on the go, but it really wasn't anything to shout from the rooftops. So, in many ways 'The Walking Dead' came along and saved me from going down another road that would have been a lot less profitable."

Charlie Adlard's involvement with the book has done a lot more for him than put money in his pocket. "I've got a lot to thank 'The Walking Dead' and Robert for in the end," said Adlard. "I wouldn't have dreamt in a million years how well this has book has done financially, professionally and creatively for me. On a professional level it's changed the way I see how I do things in the industry. Before 'The Walking Dead' I wouldn't have touched a creator-owned book with a barge pole. Primarily because I'm the artist, it takes longer to draw it than it does to write it, I have a wife and two kids, I have to support them, it's just not logical to go down that road the way the industry is at the moment."

"The only creator-owned in this industry worldwide, though

I don't know about Japan, are European books. In most European books they give you a page rate, but in the United States and Britain, with a creator-owned book, you're taking the big risk. You're doing it for nothing. If it's successful, great. You reap the rewards. If it's not, you've basically just done X number of pages for free. Sure, you've fulfilled yourself creatively, but time-wise, you're exhausted and you're poor at the end of it. Doing 'The Walking Dead' has completely changed my outlook on that.

"Also, I'm lucky because I have spare time to do projects I want to do as opposed to doing it because somebody's offering me money for it. I did another project for [A1T/Planet Lar] with Joe Casey called 'Rock Bottom' which was basically, you know..." Adlard laughed. "I haven't received nickel spent for that book. I just wanted to draw it because it was so good. I'm doing a European book now and I've spent two days doing a page where, with 'The Walking Dead' I spend three hours. It's not financially viable to do it for me, but I'm able to do it because of 'The Walking Dead.' It's a fantastic position to be in.

Fans of Adlard's work on "The Walking Dead" have no cause to fear that Adlard's "better position in the industry" will lead him to seek greener pastures. He has no desire to mess with a winning formula. "I've been on 'The Walking Dead' for four years now. 'The X-Files' was only two. I see no light at the end of the tunnel in terms of me leaving the book. I can see another four, five, ten years."

Adlard remarked that he never thought he'd be able to say something like that. Because of "The Walking Dead," the artist said, "I can see my career further ahead of me than I ever have before."

ERIC STEPHENSON INTERVIEW:

As Executive Director of Image Comics, Eric Stephenson has seen a great many properties come through the fold of the San Francisco publisher. Some titles flourish, others disappear almost as rapidly as they arrived. Occasionally, one strikes a chord with readers and can be classified a legitimate phenomenon.

One such comic book is "The Walking Dead," the best-selling black-and-white zombie epic written by Robert Kirkman and illustrated by Charlie Adlard. In anticipation of the series' landmark fiftieth issue, CBR News has over the past few days spoken with Kirkman and Adlard, previewed pages from the hotly anticipated issue, and we're joined now by Eric Stephenson to look back on the series beginnings and to talk about what the book means to Image today.

Kirkman was hardly an unknown quantity to Stephenson when the writer came to Image with his idea for a zombie drama. "By the time Robert started talking to us about 'The Walking Dead,' he'd done his first 'SuperPatriot' miniseries and we were pretty far along on 'Invincible,'" Eric Stephenson told CBR News. "I don't remember if he pitched 'Tech Jacket' or 'The Walking Dead' first, but he definitely wanted to do more work at Image, and he was really excited about doing a zombie book. Part of that was down to his enthusiasm for zombie flicks, but he was also interested in doing something other than superheroes."

Stephenson recalled, however, that Kirkman's pitch was met with some concern. "We liked it, but I know Jim Valentino [then-Publisher of Image Comics] did feel it needed to be something more than 'just a zombie book.' 'Zombie comics weren't really a sure thing at that point, and I think Jim felt there needed to be more of a hook than 'Hey, zombies!'" Robert and I wound up discussing the book quite a bit after Jim had voiced his reservations, and my position was that it looked and read well, but that Jim wanted to know would make 'The Walking Dead' stand out from other zombie titles.

"Robert told me that there were going to be some other elements to the story," Stephenson continued, "some sci-fi oriented stuff that would set the whole concept apart from other zombie titles. I think the idea was that the planet was being prepared for an alien invasion or something like that. Whatever it was, I passed that on to Valentino and he seemed to think that sounded different and interesting enough to give the title a green light. A little later, probably around issue six, I asked Robert what was going on with the alien invasion, because it didn't seem like he was setting that up at all.

Robert laughed and said that was never going to happen, that he'd just pulled that out of thin air in an effort to convince us the book was going to be different."

Early on, Stephenson realized the "The Walking Dead" was a bonafide hit. The numbers told the story. "The first issue sold out right away, and then the second one did, too. Reorders were very strong right from the beginning and sales started trending upwards with issue three. There was the standard drop with issue two, but then it went right back up with three and kept climbing from there."

Image moved quickly to support its new breakout title and sustain its heat. "Early on, we supported the book with things like free copies to retailers and overships," said Stephenson, "but I think the most important thing we did was rush out that first trade and make sure it came out alongside issue seven. We've worked very closely with Robert to make sure 'The Walking Dead' is always in print, in as many different formats as possible and I think that's helped immeasurably in terms of expanding the book's audience, both within the direct market and beyond."

Conversely, "The Walking Dead" has also served Image in return. Asked if "The Walking Dead's" high profile has helped Image as a whole, Stephenson responded, "In some cases, sure. We have a pretty diverse line of books, though, so not everyone who enjoys 'The Walking Dead' is going to be interested in the full line. Some horror fans or zombie fans just aren't into superheroes or fantasy or sci-fi or whatever. 'The Walking Dead' probably brings more eyes to our books, but it really depends on the tastes of the individual readers as to whether or not they're going to branch out from there."

"It's certainly put the lie to that old myth that Image only publishes a certain type of superhero comic," Stephenson added.

In an industry that seemingly became infatuated with the zombie genre, "The Walking Dead" survived this invasion of the undead, as its fiftieth issue can attest. Stephenson has his belief on what has set the book apart from and caused it to rise above from the rest of the zombie books that have been published in the last several years. "I think the appeal of the book is the characters," he said. "It's not just a zombie book. At 50 issues, I can't imagine anyone's buying the book just to look at more decaying flesh."

It's a view Stephenson confirms with his favorite moment from the series thus far. "Issue six was an early favorite of mine, I thought the scene at the end of the issue, with Carl and Shane, was really well done," he said, referring to when the ostensible lead of the series, Rick, confronts his partner Shane while hunting. Shane preferred it when Rick was thought to be dead, and even had an affair with Rick's wife, Lori. Shane attempted to get that status quo back by killing Rick, but Rick's son Carl defends his father by shooting Shane in the throat. Afterward, he cried, "It isn't like killing the dead ones." Rick assured him that "it never should be."

"I'm not a big zombie fan myself," Stephenson confessed, "but the characters definitely caught my interest right from the beginning. Issue six, and that scene in particular, was kind of the point where I really got sucked in, though."

Beyond the fiftieth issue, Image will continue to support "The Walking Dead" with trade paperbacks and hardcover omnibus editions. Stephenson says there are further things in the offing. "We have other things planned, definitely, and I do think there are opportunities yet to be taken advantage of by the title. Robert and I were talking about this recently, and I think we've only begun to explore all the publishing options for this book."

Okay — next issue we'll get back into the normal letter answering business — I'll see you then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hello All,

Here we are, at the end of an amazing 52 week look back at one of the most successful and brilliant comics in the industry today.

Thanks so much for being with us. I leave you with a newsarama interview.

All the best,

Sina Grace

Okay, I'm VERY sorry for the lateness of this issue, I hope to be making an announcement soon on how I'm going to once and for all, get this book back on track (without changing a thing--don't worry). Now, speaking of announcements:

Recently, it was announced that I've been made partner at Image Comics. That's pretty cool, right? I'm very VERY excited about the new opportunities that's opened up and since the announcement I've pretty much been swamped with new and exciting things to deal with. SO... I'll be skipping my letters column duties again this month--which is VERY embarrassing, because I know these things are important to a lot of you.

Instead, I'll be running an interview from NEWSARAMA.COM conducted by one MATT BRADY which explains a little of what I've got planned for Image now that I'm sitting at the table with Larsen, McFarlane, Silvestri and Valentino.

Enjoy!

Newsarama: First off Robert, how did this get started? I have a feeling it wasn't something that you initiated?

Robert Kirkman: This came from my relationship with the current partners and publisher Eric Stephenson. They all seem to like me and they know I've got good ideas for the company and would be a strong addition to their braintrust. This isn't just a matter of "his book sells well, let's make him a partner." I'm hoping to

bring much more to the table than that.

NRAMA: What was your gut reaction when you were asked?

RK: I was very flattered. This is the first time in the history of Image Comics that someone new has been brought into the fold.

NRAMA: So what does the position mean? What will your responsibilities be in addition to just creating your books?

RK: I'll be working closely with the other partners to take steps toward strengthening the Image Comics brand. I'll be working with new publisher Eric Stephenson as we hunt down exciting new talent that could use a boost from Image Comics and I'd also like to work with the talent we already have under our roof to do whatever I can to help them grow their readership and strengthen the overall Image Comics line. Don't misunderstand me, this isn't anything more than doing things like talking the Luna Brothers into doing more Ultra or begging Ennis, Palmiotti and Conner to do a sequel to The Pro, or sending Warren Ellis whiskey to entice him and Ben Tempel-Smith to do more issues of Fell. It'll be things like that. Image Comics will always be a place where creators of a certain caliber can do whatever they want with complete and total freedom.

NRAMA: Why did you accept the offer?

RK: With Invincible and The Walking Dead recently passing the issue 50 mark, and The Astounding Wolf-Man going strong and many, many more ideas for creator-owned series bubbling up in my head--it was starting to become clear that Image Comics is my home. It's where I enjoy working the most; it's where I'm treated the best, and all I've ever wanted out of a publisher. What this offer means to me, is nothing less than the opportunity to do my part to ensure that Image Comics will be here for future generations to come, so they can have the same freedom and opportunity I've been given.

NRAMA: We recently spoke to Eric about his new title and plans for the future...tell us about your commitment/vision for Image.

RK: Image Comics was once the leader in this industry. Image led and the other publishers followed. Image Comics can be that company again. Other companies (who will go nameless) will never be able to compete with Marvel and DC on any level; they rise and fall on the strengths of whatever license they hold this week. And with recent missteps at DC I see our two-party system slowly becoming a one party system and that scares me, quite frankly. This industry thrives on competition... that's what keeps things going, the drive to compete--to do battle if you will... and that's what I'm after.

I'm not out to crush other publishers, I don't want to sell more comics and force them to sell less. I want to make comics exciting again, readers have been lulled to sleep by a pattern. Event, follow-up to event, lead up to next event, new event. Wash. Rinse. Repeat. In the process very few new ideas are being brought to the table... it's just the same pieces getting moved around again and again and again and again. And all we're doing with that is maintaining the status quo. That will eventually get old, readers will tire of it. Let's stir the pot a little, shake things up. We need to raise the level of excitement in this industry. This tennis match of creators going back and forth from Marvel and DC is getting old. Let's change the game, bring in a new dynamic. Then we'll all sell more comics. Market share is irrelevant, let's all just sell more comics. That's what everyone wants.

Image has always been about being an alternative... for readers and creators. I want Image to be the premier alternative. That's my main goal.

Image currently publishes some of the best books on the market... and some that are not the best. There are changes to be made that will result in a stronger and healthier Image Comics.

The Image "I" used to make other publishers quake in their boots and it's time to bring that fear back into the world of comics. It's time to wake the sleeping giant. The first step toward this goal will be announced at the Image Comics Panel at Comic-Con, 4pm on Friday... I'd recommend being there if you can make it.

NRAMA: As the Times story pointed out, your exclusive with Marvel is up. Does this new role at Image preclude you from working with Marvel or signing on another exclusive?

RK: I've been doing other creators and the industry as a whole a disservice for the last few years. I worked at Marvel partly to help get my name out there, to gain wider recognition, but mostly because I do like the characters and there are good people at Marvel and I was having fun working there. It's always been assumed that I made my living at Marvel and did my Image books for fun. I've done nothing to dissuade that assumption, but nothing could be further from the truth. Marvel Comics has always been a fraction of my income. Aside from Ultimate X-Men and

Marvel Zombies, most of my Marvel books have been outsold by my Image titles. I never worked at Marvel for the money; the money was insignificant in the grand scheme of things. I had a Spider-Man itch, I had an X-Men itch, I was there to scratch it... and I did, and I've moved on. My plan is to focus solely on creator-owned work for the foreseeable future. Creator-Owned comics is where it is at. Brian K. Vaughan knows this, Warren Ellis knows this, Garth Ennis knows this and I hope, in the coming years more and more people will realize this and take the plunge.

NRAMA: That said, given that you have a larger stake in Image now, will you be scaling back on all your non-Image work?

RK: I've completed all my scripts for Marvel, Destroyer Max, which I'm doing with Cory Walker, is done, Killraven with Rob Liefeld is done. Those are slow burn projects that will be shipping well into 2009, but aside from those and a few odds and ends that haven't been announced yet, I'm currently not doing any work for any publisher other than Image and I couldn't be happier.

NRAMA: Will you expanding your Image work?

RK: Absolutely. I've been banking concepts for the last four years while I was under contract at Marvel. You'll be seeing a lot more from me eventually. That said, I'm going to be holding off on debuting anything new until maybe summer of 2009. Aside from Haunt with Todd McFarlane, that, I'm told, will be debuting soon.

NRAMA: Anything else I missed that you'd like to mention?

RK: I'm making myself available for any comic creators wanting to discuss Image Comics at Comic-Con. I've got a pretty full schedule already but if anyone would like to touch base, please email me at kirkman@funkotron.com and I'll try to fit you in.

So, that'll have to do for this month. I know, I know... I promise I'll get you a REAL honest-to-God letters column next issue. Keep writing letters--please. I'll see you all back here, then.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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I've been pretty light on the letters for the last few months, and the mail has been coming in pretty hot and heavy for the last few issues--in fact, I could have probably filled three issues worth of letters columns with the mail I received for issue 48... so that's for writing in. But, we need to move on from that issue and I do have to keep these letters columns a little shorter at this time so that I can get all these books on time (I promise it'll be worth it in the end) so this issue's letters column will mostly touch on issue 49... but I did want to run this, my FAVORITE letter about issue 48:

"Oh my God... All the time, it was... You finally really did it. You Maniac! You blew it up! Ah, damn you! God damn you all to hell!"

Stan MacDona d

If you don't get the reference... I look upon you in SHAME!!!

Now, onto the response to issue 49... and who better to start with...?

Dear Kirkman,
I want my money back! By my count more than half the panels of this issue didn't have dialog--but you might wanna go back and check that all the same. No, I didn't get much out of this issue. Please don't do like a 20 years later thing with Rick's son, Carl, in the next little while, cause I can kind of smell it coming. What could issue #50 be about? I smell... maybe some new characters...? By the way, if you haven't been getting my letters for Issues of Invincible don't worry, I haven't been getting issues of Invincible.

Sincerely,
Andrew J Shaw

Ah, another classic. Andrew, would you complain that a movie had too little dialogue? Would you complain that a song had too few lyrics? Comics are words--AND pictures and they use both to tell the story. Sometimes one more than the other--but it's an equal balance. There have been more than a few issues of The Walking Dead that have had TWICE as much dialogue as the average comic... and there will be more like that as the series progresses--but y'know, people have to think and be upset and sleep and have quiet moments from time to time--or the book will just seem fake (or more fake). I'll make it up to you, promise.

And dammit--you should stick with Invincible. C'mon--you know you love it!

Mr. Kirkman,

First I want to say that you are one of my favorite writers and both Invincible and The Walking Dead two of my favorite books out. I haven't seen another writer to be able to take the large cast of characters (even though it seems like you have cut that down drastically in TWD) and give the reader some feeling for each one of them is something that I haven't seen before.

As you can see from this very issue... the cast... isn't so small any more. (Still smaller than it WAS).

Now with that said I just want to say that you are a sick, sick, sick person! After reading one of the most disturbing sequences I have ever read Gov. raping Michonne. Then read one of the most emotional scenes in an issue i.e. Tyreese getting beheaded. Then you top it off with another disturbing scene with Lori and Judith dying. Oh and by the looks of things you are going to leave Carl to fend for himself with the latest cliffhanger in issue 49. Very sick, but god damn can I not put this book down. It is the most interesting stories that I have ever read and you have really given us a book where anything can happen and with your twisted plans I am sure that more crazy issues are going to be coming

Lastly, are there still plans for an Omnibus vol. 2 in the near future? I have read the each issue individually. But want some more Walking Dead on my bookshelf I have been holding out on the individual smaller HCs for the big Omnibus that I am hoping will come.

Keep going 'till 100
Josh Norman

Yes--Omnibus Volume 2, containing issues 24-48 WILL be in stores in November. So be on the lookout.

Kirkman!

I love Invincible, I love Battle Pope, I love The Astounding Wolf-Man. The Walking Dead owns me. I've been with you from the beginning but I can't stay silent any longer. I cried after seeing the last panel of issue 48. First time ever reading a comic. If you do it again we're going to have issues. I loved issue 49 took me a good 30 minutes to read and there was barely any dialogue!

Did you hear that Andrew Shaw?!

It was a good issue for reflecting on everything that's happened to everyone so quickly. I've been with these people in this impossible situation for over four years now and it still breaks my heart when everything turns to shit. I know you like trying to avoid him in your letters pages, but if this gets printed I want everyone to know that Benoit (though I love him) never has and never could make me care about a group of people like this for so long. I noticed that your TWD readers don't employ the numbered question format religiously in their letters, but I like it so here it goes

1) Your writing and characterization is brilliant. I love everyone who even passes as a decent human being in this book. Do you get any sadistic pleasure from brutally killing someone I (and maybe other readers, but mostly me) care about? When will you stop breaking my heart?

I get excited when I feel like their death is going to be a definitive moment in the series... like the death of Tyreese. But I don't enjoy that I'm killing them. I don't know--most of the time I know it's coming a good long time in advance, sometimes years... so when I finally get to it, it's more like "oh, here's this scene" instead of "Woo-hoo, I'm killing a dude!"

2) Will you just leave Rick alone for a couple of issues? If he gets any more effed up and lives you're going to have to employ some stupid mutant healing factor for his continued existence among the living. He is still alive after 49, right?

He is indeed. He's also been pretty much unscathed for the last few issues. The poor guy might just make it.

3) I know you love writing this book and that we both hope it goes on forever, but do you have any far reaching events that the book is heading towards or do you just plan out your next move as it comes?

There are two more big events planned for this book--and that'll get us up through 100 and beyond and I'm sure by the time we get there I'll have a lot more planned. The Woodbury arc (25-48) was planned around the start of this series... so yeah, I plan things pretty far in advance.

4) Are there any dogs left in the world? Carl needs a friend badly. Someone that is loyal, protective and won't go batshit crazy. Although if you ever did introduce an animal companion I'm sure it would be torn apart s x ways from Sunday.

Most artists hate drawing animals. I pride myself in never asking my artists to draw animals... that said, we just saw some horses--and we'll be seeing more things like that as time goes on.

5) More Astounding Wolf-Man, please?

I'm doing my best.

I know you and Charlie can't help but be phenomenal so keep it up. I'd read the book if it was just zombie moans and Charlie's art, it's that good.

Your brain dead reader,
Omar

Thanks for writing!

Hey man:

First up, #49 is the best cover so far. And there have been some awesome covers, after four years. My prediction is that Rick comes back as a zombie and Jr. has to put down zombie pop. If that happens, you're a sicko. What a way to do a #50 though. I got on board with the Safety Behind Bars trade and I've collected every ish from #19 -- gradually I expected Rick to die in every ish -- except for #49. Dang! #19 is my other favorite cover. Speaking of cool covers, have you ever seen Crime Does Not Pay #24:



Good lord--comics were CRAZY back then!

But Rick's a great hero, and I've been pulling for him all the way. I hope he isn't dead, but if he is, following that kid around this zombie world will surely be a hoot.

I've always hearted Letter Hacks; I've always been a fan of letter columns in general. But I've noticed the writers in Letter Hacks ask the same remarks over and over. If one more person asks "what is your favorite zombie movie" or "have you seen the Dawn remake" I'm gonna barf over my CGC'd 7.5 Black Cat Mystery #32. I figure if you could print the following at the beginning of every Letter Hacks, it might cut back on you having to respond to the same questions and comments over and over again:

- 1) This is your first time writing a letter to a comic book.
- 2) Kirkman hopes TWD gets made into an HBO mini-series
- 3) Yes, TWD is consistently incredible.
- 4) Kirkman hates black people. (Bendis loves them.)

And I think that should cover it. Anyway, TWD is great stuff, I think y'all know this by now. A fan,

MRG01

Hey! You were doing really well until number 4! Bendis hates black people more than I do!!*

Robert Kirkman actually doesn't hate black people at all. In fact, I would say he loves them. He loves them all. He is not racist in any way shape or form.*

****Okay, Robert is pretty sure Bendis doesn't hate black people either.**

Kirkman,

Your book is the only book out there that I willingly put myself into further debt. On a college budget this shit isn't cheap.

I must take my hat off to you sir! Every issue, you fucking blow my mind. Even when the douche bag at the store fucking tells me that Lori dies before I read your book you were capable to describe so much that dumb fuck couldn't. Just finished reading issue #49 in the park n' ot of my local comic shop, and once again I find my mouth on the floor.

Wait a minute--the guy who sold you your book ruined it for you?!
What an asshole. I'd stop going to that store. That's messed up. Who does that?

Congratulations on reaching issue #50! (by the time you read this it should be done on your end.) keep up the great work and I find myself wondering what your going to think of next. Best of luck to you in the future. Keep this book on the shelves and I'll read it to the day you die.

Davis

Man--so many people congratulated us on reaching issue 50 before we actually did it. I'm glad we got the issue out! We would have looked like schmucks!

Dear Kirkman,
I haven't written in a while but I have still been reading. Wow. How the hell did this book make it so far?

Thanks for the vote of confidence! I'm glad you finally decided to write in--I think.

I worried every month that the announcement would finally drop and my monthly zombie goodness would be canceled. 50 issues and still going strong, man. Congrats! Since you moved the crew into the prison, I have been waiting for this issue, the issue where everyone I can't

stand anymore dies. You killed all of them and more! The baby, man! That really hit a note I think, in the series overall. Babies represent the future. You killed the future. With everyone dead person rising and with no new people being born, the world is truly ending. I dig that. It seems we are now watching the final days of the human race. Good times. Ok, questions:

1. Are you still actively resisting the urge to improve the zombies? Make them smarter, faster, stronger (I'm thinking Romero here with Bub, Big Daddy, and his character in the Toe Tags comic).

I'm not resisting any urge--I have no desire to do that. That's Romero's thing and it was cool. I'm playing in a zombie world similar to Romero's--but I not outright stealing from the guy. We're going our own way.

2. Do you feel that zombies are relevant today? Never mind sales and all that, I mean philosophically. What does the zombie have to say about our reality?

Buddy, I never went to college. They're entertaining and I enjoy doing this book--relevant? Hell if I know. I think so... this world is a very dangerous place again.

3. Who are you voting for? Which candidate would make the best zombie?

Look, I'm a left of center kind of guy, but I'm not going to turn this into a political forum. I've finally reached an age where politics are very important to me. I think everyone should be as informed as possible and everyone should vote--but only if they're informed (or if they're blindly voting for my guy). Politics are important--really, this is just a book about people trying to keep from getting eaten by zombies.

4. Was Dr. Logan on to something?

I don't know exactly what you're referring to. Bub kind of proved his theories right, right?

5. When are they going to find a helicopter? There must be a helicopter!

There was a helicopter in issue 26!!

I am still on board for another 50 issues. After that, it will likely suck, I mean come on. Only so many babies you can kill. Unless they find that helicopter. Then I am sure they could find more babies. Oh, and Shoot 'Em Up was one of the greatest movies ever. Carl should learn some gun-fu. That would keep me reading past issue 100. It seems THE work n' g formula for a good zombie story goes something like this: Small group of survivors meets up with another in some safehouse. Shelter is besieged as internal conflicts arise, juxtaposed with what is going on outside. Internal conflicts lead to breach in defense, zombies pour in, and many die. Few survivors fly off in the distance to assembly repeat scenario ad infinitum. Is this how you see this book continuing? I'd say you could just throw in those aliens to jack it all up, but the movie Undead did that pretty well. While I like the formulaic nature of the zombie story, I wonder how long it will take to get old. Romero decided zombies get smarter. Others write in some cure or reason for the outbreak (I always imagine Jeff Goldblum running in shouting, "I figured it out!"). I am eagerly awaiting your personal twist.

You haven't let us down yet.

Love,
Chris Pitts

Y'know, when issue 3 or so was out--people were saying "This is good--but I don't see how it could last and remain as good" and here we are--issue 50, and people seem to still like it. Some think the book is better than it's ever been. I know I'm having just as much fun--hell, it seems like I'm writing issue 10, not 56 or whatever. So who's to stay we can't keep it going after 100? Who's to say it won't still be as good? That formula you mentioned won't be the fate of this series, trust me. There's still a lot of cool things planned for this book before we throw the aliens in!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I have two questions for ye.

1.) If there is ever a Walking Dead television series that you are in charge of, would you prefer it be Black and White or in Color.

Color. I think it'd look too weird and arty in black and white. What works for the comic--won't work for a show.

2.) You have said you have decided not to reveal a cause for the zombie plague (which I fully support and thank you for). But have you come up with a reason for the plague that you are keeping secret?

May the dead keep walking,
Adam Davis

There is a reason, and as you can see at the end of this issue--I might just have finally decided to reveal it.

And with that--I'll leave you kids so that I can get to work on getting issue 54 out very very soon.

I'll see you then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
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Issue 54, kids. I gotta say... it feels good to be in the big numbers... firmly established, past issue fifty and full steam ahead. I still LOVE working on this book as much as I did on the first issue--in fact, infinitely more so. This is what I got into comics to do--to tell long continuing stories over an extremely long run on a series. Good times.

Also... I hope you've noticed we're getting the issues out pretty regularly these days. We plan on that being a continuing trend. Wish us luck.

Capt. Kirkman,

About six months ago I was given the entire Walking Dead series to borrow from a friend of mine and found myself hooked to the gills. Unfortunately as with most things I love, I have to pick it apart.

1. You can't kill everyone and expect people not to lose interest. At the core of any story are the characters, and I don't know if I have the patience to accept and empathize with new ones whenever you get bored. In a movie when everyone dies the movie is over and I don't have to care anymore but this thing just keeps on going. Ugh.

Well, as you can see from this issue... there are a great many characters still alive... and so that shouldn't be too much of a problem, and also, there are some new characters that should grow on you over time. Tyreese wasn't introduced into the book until issue 7, Hershel in issue 10 Michonne in issue 19, The Governor in issue 26... this book is always going to be changing, growing and evolving... but there will never be a time when it's ALL new characters. So don't worry. Honestly, though--I think the evolving cast and the fact that anything can happen in this book is something that makes it so popular. We'll see... so far, sales have only gone UP since I killed "everyone" in issue 48.

2. I hate to say it but you might need to address the problem of a great deal of the characters looking too similar. I know I'm not alone here. Far to many times I found myself confusing one character for another or completely forgetting them altogether. Scars and headbands only work for so long.

I'd argue that the characters do look vastly different from each other now more than ever... and there's only so much you can do in a black and white book about normal people. Rick and Hershel might have looked similar before... Andrea and Carol might have been hard to tell apart in one or two scenes... but that's not going to be a problem now. Everyone in the book now has a unique look... I'd be hard pressed to find something similar about any of them.

3. Cliff Rathburn is kick ass and has far too little to do with this series, give him a page in the comic! Just let him draw a zombie like he used to on the back cover, but put it smack dab in the middle incorporated into the story like a jolting little wake up call.

I love Cliff as much as the next guy--but I'm afraid that might be a bit too jarring--it'd take people out of the story.

4. You don't have to explain why the zombies are around, but someone needs to set some ground rules for those of us with bad memories. What kills them, how smart are they, what do we know and what can we learn?

It comes up from time to time... some of that was discussed this issue.

How about some military personnel or something? They could shed some light.

Keep reading... we'll have some answers of some kind as we move forward.

I stopped reading comics for a long time, but you've got me back on them. thanks.

Thanks for your time.
Brad Radcock

Thank YOU for some time. It's good to get letters like this--that make it easy for me to have something to say... without just making fun of you or being mean. Thanks for that.

Dear Robert,

I met you over the Chicago comic-con weekend. It was Friday in the fountain room after your panel that I missed. I was "guy in a red shirt". I had the Raiders hat on and the Raiders tattoo. It was a pleasure meeting you.

I remember you!

Thanks for being cool to a zombie fanboy! While talking to you, I asked if you could kill the twins off. You said "yes!" You even admitted that "they don't really do much do they?". Well sir, I geeked out and looked into it. They have a total of 10 lines in the whole run of the book. (Issues 9, 10, 15, 16, 22 and 26). Most of the time all we see them doing is playing. I understand that their presence was important. Their youth and "family" made the group seem like a whole in the beginning of the book. It made Rick's responsibility of a leader important because it wasn't just adults and his family that had to be protected and fed. Later, Chris and Julie get stuck baby-sitting the twins, Carl and Sophia. It allowed you to show us the angst in Chris and Julie because they didn't want to baby sit. The twins also made the loss of Donna seem somewhat important since she was their mother. Also, because of the twins, Allen's downward spiral into hopelessness was easier to understand and enhanced. After Allen finally died, you used the twins as a tool to express how Andrea has matured as a character. Andrea is still in her early 20's (I think). Having her take on the responsibility of the twins has matured her character. I can't possibly see any reason to keep the twins around any more. They have had very few lines in the book. They

make very few appearances (about once per trade). Their deaths could be used to develop Dale and Andrea's relationship more. You already killed off Judith who was much more innocent than the twins are, so you've already crossed that line. Kill them off already. Everyone wins. You won't have to work them in the story. Adlard doesn't have to find a way draw them into the book. We don't have to read about them anymore. It's a win-win-win situation.

Thanks,
Mike Gineman
Ohio

Well, they DON'T do a whole lot in this series... but y'know they ARE little kids. It's not like they're going to be carrying stories anytime soon. That said, I do have plans for them and I'd hate to just kill them off so they don't appear once in every trade and bug you. As you've pointed out in your letter--they've served a whole lot of story elements of this series so far... and they'll continue being just as useful--just you wait.

Congratulations on 50.

I called in sick to work today so I could pick this issue up. Granted, I was also pretty hung-over, but I will still lay claim to the gesture as an example of how much one can actually care about a comic book.

It's very flattering--and I feel your pain. I was on a business trip for my day job before I worked in comics full time and I had no idea where the comic shops were in the town I was in... and the new issue of SAVAGE DRAGON had shipped--so I got the phone book, called a cab and had him take me to a shop in the phone book. An hour or so later... and \$40 more broke--I arrived and bought my comic... and then had to pay another \$40 to get back. So yeah... I paid \$83 for an issue of Savage Dragon back when I was making less than 20K a year... fun times.

The wrap-around cover is so great that it almost makes up for the five recycled pages.

Ian Dennis

Five recycled pages? Did you get a misprinted copy?

Dear Robert:

Issue 50 = uh-mazing. Seriously, it's very good. The last few months, I haven't even made it back to my house before I had to stop and find out what's happening with everybody in TWD. I read #48 in the parking lot of a Lowe's and no one was there to hug me when it was over.

So, my friend from Kentucky says that nobody who actually lives in Kentucky likes My Morning Jacket. Is that true?

Well... I don't even know what "My Morning Jacket" is. A movie? A band? I have NO CLUE.

Do your friends and neighbors like TWD and/or Invincible? Do people just dislike the successful people from their hometown/state? Down here in Tennessee, we've got Eric Powell, but not nearly enough people appreciate him, from what I can tell. So what's your experience with people who live in your area? Is it weird when your friend or relative or someone you're acquainted with reads and likes something you've done? Or dislikes it? Or maybe they know where you got all your ideas and they're not impressed. Like, your aunt Lori was pissed when she heard about issue 48, but uncle Rick just thought it was kinda funny. And Tyreese was more popular than you in high school. Oh, I'm on to you.

Van Barnett

My father's name is Carl, but aside from that... there's next to nothing taken from my actual life for this book... aside from the setting of the first few issues. I grew up in Cynthia, Kentucky (as did Tony Moore).

I have friends who read my work... as far as I know most of them like it... but I try to make sure it's clear that they don't HAVE to like my work. I mean, I don't care how many mattresses my friend sells at his job or how good of a factory worker someone is. This is, after all, just a job. Liking the work I do has nothing to do with friendship. So yeah...

Most local people are very friendly and supportive. They let me think they're interested in my stories and most of them are all around nice people... then again, I do technically live in the South.

All right, Kirkman.

I hate and love you at the same time. I hate to write you this letter and I hate to say the same damn thing I've ready in the past several letter hacks, but I'm going to say it anyway: This is indeed my first time writing into any comic in my whole life.

Suuuuuuure.

First up is the love. I haven't read comics in several years but your comic sucked me back in. I love it, more than any comic I've ever read. I'm a horror nut at heart and zombies have always been my favorite. Just something about the end of the world has always appealed to me, on a fantasy level only, of course. The reality is the end of the world would suck and I probably wouldn't make it a week. But I love you because you've given us such great stories and great characters and in a genre that I love. More importantly, my 11 year old son, who I'm slowly nurturing into a full blown horror nut (he's only up to Monster Squad so far, but he's about ready for some Freddy, don't ya think?), is also in love with your comic. It's a regular routine for us now. Each time we talk he asks me when the next Walking Dead is coming out. I tell him I don't know, since you can't get it down to a regular monthly cycle (that's just a preview to the hate, man). But finally the release date will appear on the Image forum and I give him the heads up - next Wednesday it's out! He's excited, I'm excited. We get it, read it, discuss it, and begin the wait again.

Okay, so now it's time for the hate. Why can't you just release the damn thing once a month like you are supposed to? I've read your bit about how if you run the math on how long the comic has been out, you are nearly at the 12 issues a year. Yeah, you throw "nearly" in there, which prevents me from really nipping into you, but I'm going to do it anyway. I just googled the release date for issue #1; it was October 2003. So this October 2008 is going to be the five year anniversary, right? Where the hell is issue #60? Issue #50 came out on July 2nd and if I were a betting man, I suspect we might be at issue #53 by October. That's seven issues behind, man. Over a half year. I just can't accept that, so get with the program and start pumping these suckers out! Oh, but don't sacrifice quality or anything like that. I still want top quality.

This issue will be in stores in October 2008... so that's 54 issues in FIVE years. That's 11 issues a year... except for one year where we shipped 10. That's not so bad. Compare us to most other comics... and you'll see there aren't an awful lot of comics that get 12 issues out in a year. Also... let's give Charlie Adlard some credit here. What other artist produced 48 comics in four and a half years? Really... point them out... you'll get what... three guys? THREE. Charlie is THE MAN. He's busting his ass on this series and don't a damn fine job on it. He's drawing much more issues a year than most everyone.

That said... we'll be shipping 12 issues in 2009. It's guaranteed, the press release should have gone out by now. We're good to go. It's going to be awesome.

And while we are on the hate bit, why are the issues so damn short? My son and I read them and are like: That's it? That two minute read is all we get? Seriously, is that the standard length for a comic these days? It just seems like Wolf-Man is longer. Hopefully I'm wrong on that. I think the

fact that I read all the hardcovers spoiled me, too.

The Walking Dead is actually LONGER than Wolf-Man. You get two extra pages in The Walking Dead. Sometimes we do quieter issues... do yourself a favor and look at the art. That's the whole point with a comic. Blazing over the silent panels or tearing through a comic with less dialogue would be like fast forwarding through the silent parts of a movie... you'd miss something. I promise the issues would be far more rewarding if you take your time. Also, the recent issues with just Rick and Carl were largely silent... Carl didn't have anyone to talk to for a while there.

In closing, let me state that I'm coming to the Baltimore comic con and plan to get you to sign some stuff for me and my son. I expect you to take some pictures with us, too! Because even though I hate you, I love you, too, man. Thanks for everything.

Dave

By the time this sees print--I will have already met you and done this. Isn't that NEAT?

P.S. I reviewed your comic on my web site - horrordvds.com. If you happen to print this and let me plug my site in the best comic I've ever read, all will be forgiven. The choice is yours, dude.

Done.

P.P.S. You're an asshole for making me think Rick was a zombie. The full pager clinched it for me, along with the fact you are heartless son-of-bitch to the characters that I've grown to love.

Foiled you!

Dear Kirkman.

No request. just one demand.

42 page issue.

Thank you the books been great lately.

Ken Wilson

Let's see if I can get the 22 page issues coming out on time first.

Dear Omnipotent Kirk One,

I have been reading comics for a relatively short time (three years) but your work is the first from any of the humanities that has reduced me to screaming profanities at a piece of paper. You, in a word, Kick-Ass. I used a hyphen so that is one word. Because I said so. I have been reading this book since I picked up the first hardcover on a whim so that I could score free shipping from an Internet book store. I read the entire thing in one night, while at work. I now have a personal rule NOT to read TWD while at work since I work on a psychiatric ward and screaming profanities at inanimate objects during the middle of night is frowned upon. Needless to say, the next day I went to my local comic shop and ordered all of the trades, grabbed the singles in stock, and caught up with the story at issue 48. Damn. You have just surpassed Joss Whedon as my biggest Love/Hate man crush.

Hate? Where's the hate?

Anyway, numbered questions.

1) Do you yourself know what caused the zombie plague or are you in the dark as much as the rest of us?

I have ideas... but it's nothing set in stone because I never plan on writing it. So yes... I do know... kind of.

2) In the letters column for issue 50 you said "I would never kill a real person..." and then in another letter you said "trust me, if there's a hell... all the homeless people I've murdered will get me in there way faster than any story I've written in this series." While I understand the attempt at jocularity, do you, Robert Kirkman, not consider the homeless "real" people?

I do not.*

***This is another attempt at jocularity.**

3) What is wrong with you? Read World War Z. It actually gave me nightmares (in the single meaning of the plural)

I discussed this with Max Brooks briefly at Comic-Con a year ago or so. I can't read World War Z for fear I'll be influenced by it. Same reason I haven't read The Zombie Survival guide (I do own both). I told Max this and he admitted that he didn't read The Walking Dead until AFTER he'd finished World War Z for the same reason. The problem is... if all goes well, The Walking Dead will never end... so I'm probably going to read World War Z soon. I'm really looking forward to it.

Your loyal reader until the zombie apocalypse claims us all,

James Kephart II

P.S. I find the use of post script in an electronic medium extremely hilarious.

And yet so many people do it.

Mr. Kirkman,

I'm a recent convert to WALKING DEAD fandom. Being a big Romero fan, once I got wind of the WALKING DEAD (which sounds gross) I had to pick up all the trades and back issues, which I read in a couple of glorious sittings. I was sad to see Tyreese go, thought Axel could've been kept around a little longer and developed more (as it was kind of interesting that they had a jailbird with them), and I look forward to the surviving cast getting back together again. I know you like to kill all the characters, but can ya have some fuckin' mercy on Dale and Andrea for a little while longer? I like those two.

They're safe! See--they're safe--for now.

Since I've been reading back issues and the like, Issue 50 was the first one I've had to wait for. It was too damn short! Now, alas, I'm stuck waiting for #51...

-- Greg Wierenga

P.S.: My girlfriend Amanda and I just got engaged! She doesn't like zombies for some reason, but wish her a congrats just the same. :)

Congrats!

And with that... another issue of The Walking Dead is in the can. Keep an eye out for issue 55 very soon. I'll see you there!

-Robert Kirkman

Kirkman,

Can you dump Letter Hacks and just give us more Walking Dead?
I can't read that much after your killer book!

Thanks,

Omar

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT

THE WALKING DEAD
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So what is this... issue... uh... 56? Right? Sorry, I'm starting to lose track of the numbering.

Welcome aboard, I hope you guys and gals dug the issue. We're having a lot of fun here with the series and we're all very excited about the direction the book is taking, so I hope it's coming through in the reading.

We're still playing catch-up a bit, trying to make sure these issues ship on time so you're going to have to put up with the shorter-than-usual letters columns a little bit longer.

It's not that big a deal right? I mean, Andrew Shaw's letters are still getting printed.

Speaking of which...

Dear Kirk-the-Man,

You had me. You really had me! I thought for sure that this series was pretty much done with, and that the Rick and Carl-Connection (that's a wrestling thing; you wouldn't understand) would roam the open plains together forever!! It was BOOOO-ring--karaoke, even!! But then, to borrow a line from a fellow critic: Magic! The characters, old and new, started piling up again!! And now we're on the precipice of something really big!! I can feel it. I agree with scientist-guy's assessment that Washington D.C. is the place to be... all those secret underground bunkers and stuff! And what's more, if he knows what caused the plague, well, that's--that's something too, right!? But what is Dale afraid of if he isn't afraid of the Dead? BEING dead? The Guv'nors people? Yeah, I liked this issue pretty well, I surmise. More issues like this--please! And it's not that I haven't been buying issues of INVINCIBLE--they just haven't been coming in!!

By the way, who was the Original pencil artist on TWD? I've been racking my brains (I have so many) but just can't seem to remember. And when did Charlie Adlard start on the book? I know he did Thunderbolts at one time, right?

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Wow Andrew, just... wow. I think that's the first time you've seemed to actually enjoy and issue of my work. This is a proud moment for me. Really. Very proud.

To answer your question, Tony Moore was the original artist on The Walking Dead. He drew issues one through six--and then Charlie came on with issue seven and has been here ever since. Charlie did do a Thunderbolts annual, at least--as well as countless other comics. Charlie has drawn many many comic books in his long career because he is very old.

Kirkman,

Can the zombies go up stairs?

Regards,
Jeremy Woods,
New Zealand.

Not usually--it's decided on a case by case basis... I'm sure there's a zombie out there who could... but not very well. Good question. Hey--to reference this series--was it issue 8? Rick opens the door to the basement of that house--and zombies are waiting at the top of the stairs and rush him! Look at me remembering my own books. So based on that scene--yeah, zombies can go up stairs... but it probably took them a while.

Kirkman of Action,

This is the week! THE WALKING DEAD finally caught up with INVINCIBLE. Congratulations, sir.

Are you congratulating me on one of my books having a slightly poorer shipping schedule than the other? Sheesh! Invincible should catch up again very soon. By the end of the year the books should be comfortably one issue away from each other.

To me, it means synchronicity. You've kept these books on a tight schedule through an artist change, your varied work at Marvel, and you still make time for letters. That's a success that the Big 2 have never achieved. I'll be with BRIT if it only comes out once a year...so what does keeping your books on schedule mean to you?

Well, you're one of those fine people I adore, who have noticed that up until now--the books have been on a pretty good schedule already--so thanks for that. Even when compared to a lot of Marvel and DC books, my Image titles do ship frequently--so there.

BUT, moving forward, I plan on hitting monthly dates like clockwork. I'm hoping this will show my commitment to the titles and make the titles that much more accessible to new readers. While the books I'm currently writing are doing very well... I would never turn away new readers--we could always be selling more.

It's also the first month where my Image, Dark Horse, and independent titles outnumber my Marvel purchases. We're in tight financial times and Marvel keeps putting out more and more crap \$3.99 books. I think it's important to leave budget for trying new stuff, because I read comics as a creative outlet. The same characters and stories recycled over and over is not creative. So needless to say, I think your "manifesto" about driving the industry towards creator-owned work is timely and bold. The industry and the graphic storytelling medium as a whole will be better for it. What would you say is the biggest challenge to moving in that direction?

Exclusive contracts are a big problem. It kept me from doing more creator-owned stuff when I was under contract... and contracts are staggered, so that no one is coming out of their contract at the same time... so there's little chance for a group like the original Image Seven to organize. There will be baby steps made from time to time--and I hope to soon be working in an industry where the top talent, as a whole, is creating new things rather than just fueling

a corporate entity that's milking 60 year old characters. Characters that I love--so don't get me wrong... but I see no reason there can't be at least a dozen or two top creators actually... y'know, creating stuff on a regular basis.

Anyway, sorry I missed you at the Baltimore Con but my wife is happy that I spent the weekend with her and consequently she still enjoys hearing my recaps of THE WALKING DEAD. Rock on, sir!

Brian Hans

Well, I'm glad your wife is happy! I, on the other hand, was left in the lurch. I was looking forward to seeing you. Jerk.

Dear Kirkman,

Just finished reading issue #53 and I must say it was a good one. I'm not the biggest fan of seeing the cause of a zombie epidemic revealed as the answer tends to be very similar in all zombie stories save a few and is getting very redundant. So I must say that I am hoping that scientist guy bites it at the beginning of the next issue before the big reveal (Now watch the irony unfold as he ends up being one of my favorite characters!). However, if said scientist survives to reveal the cause of the plague, I'm sure you will handle it well. This book has been nothing but great so far and I see it staying that way.

May the dead keep walking,
Adam Davis

Just keep reading. While I'm sure you can tell by now that Eugene didn't die at the opening of issue 54--he hasn't exactly gotten around to spilling the beans about the cause of this zombie epidemic. So there's still some wiggle room there. Also--when he DOES finally give the reason--who knows if he'll be right. Eh? Eh?

Hey Mr. K-

1st time writer to you, long time reader of you. You're my favorite comic writer.

I had some questions for you

1- Are we ever going to learn more about Glenn's falling out with his parents? (mentioned early on in series)

Eventually, I'm sure. No plans now.

2- Are you Bruce Brown, the writer of BRIT and if so, why?

I'm really NOT Bruce Brown. I don't know why people would even think I am.

3- If not, who is Bruce Brown?

Bruce is an all around good guy and talented writer who I met while I was running my publishing company, Funk-O-Tron. He wrote Chaser's Moon in an anthology called "Inkpunks" and that story later continued in back-ups of my title "Battle Pope: Wrath of God." He's done other stuff--and we kept in touch since then. He did write that stuff under the pen name "Kimo" but I assure you're--they're the same guy and I was never writing as either of them.

4- What are your thoughts, if any, on Marvel's pricing policy: \$.99 direct market, \$3.99 newsstand?

I think it's a necessity for the newsstand market. If a newsstand guy can make more profits off a pack of gum or a magazine then why should they carry comics? Comics are sold for more on the newsstand to justify them occupying the shelf space. At least--that's what I've been told. Just be lucky you know they're cheaper in comic shops.

5- Do you think Marvel is testing the comic market to see if a price hike would hurt comic sales?

I have no idea... seems likely but I really don't know.

6- Is there a price hike coming to your comics?

With the economy in the state it is--I'm thinking NO... but I will say this. When I started reading comics, or rather, when I started shopping at a comic store. BONE was \$2.95... and Image titles were \$2.50... and Marvel and DC books were \$1.95 and maybe even \$1.75 on some titles.

As \$2.95 became the standard price for an independent comic--Marvel eventually went to \$2.25... and then \$2.50... and then \$2.95... and then \$2.99.

Independent comics have gone to \$2.99... and some smaller publisher charge \$3.99... which a lot of people say is too expensive. But you see, Marvel & DC have advertising and newsstand and subscription revenue streams that aren't there for independent books... and they, on average, sell far more than an independent book... they should NEVER be the same price.

Now Marvel is selling more and more standard length comics at \$3.99... a dollar MORE than most independent books. That's crazy. That's just not right, frankly... but y'know what--they're smart for selling the books for whatever you'll pay for them.

I will say... if they do eventually bring all their titles to \$3.99... holy SHIT. What happened to \$3.25... or \$3.50... or \$3.75? I mean... that's a HUGE jump. I hope it doesn't cripple the entire comics industry.

Meanwhile... all my titles will remain at a nice \$2.99 for at least a little while longer.

That's all! THANK FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT and KEEP IT UP!!!!!!

PLORD4EVER

Thanks for writing.

Kirkman,

Okay. I'm nervous as hell now. Last page of #53 "And I know exactly what caused this mess." Part of me thinks this could be great. And then another part thinks this could cause THE WALKING DEAD to come crashing down.

It's like you people are waiting, hoping, expecting this book to jump the shark at any minute! Cut me some slack here guys!

I have seen other books that try to explain where the zombies come from. Sometimes it works (a biological plague got loose, the odd comet came too close to Earth and so on).

And other times not so well (it came from PENGUINS... Penguins I tell you! We're all doomed!).

I have faith in you and this book. If you're going to reveal how the dead have come back I am sure it will be a good explanation... Or at least I hope it will be.

Peace
Eric L. Busby

Continue having faith, please. I won't let you down... or at least--I'll try really goddamn hard not to.

Okay, another issue down... sweet. I'll see you all back here very soon.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
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This was a tough one. No two ways about it... sometimes writing this comic is hard. Just the panel where Carl's pants are being pulled off—that was really unsettling. I knew it was going to happen, I had it plotted out—but putting it on the screen in my script, well... I cringed a little.

In the script, I felt compelled to assure Charlie that the man trying to rape Carl wouldn't succeed.

Not really sure what point I'm trying to make here... other than there are definitely parts of this comic that Charlie and I do not produce with GLEE.

Speaking of Charlie... last issue was his FIFTIETH issue. That's right, Charlie's been on this sucker for FIFTY issues. That's a heck of a milestone. Congrats, my man—sorry I forgot to mention it last issue. Eventually, I'll have to have someone come in and write six issues so that I can let you catch up.

Speaking of catching up... how about a pat on the back. We've been knocking these issues out in rapid succession, haven't we?

Letters? Letters.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Thank you and congratulations! Like your characters, I find myself very pleased when they/you do good and good in turn is done to them/you. Your new status at Image is well deserved. I can honestly say that you are the jewel in their crown, making the establishment seem all that more friendly.

I write this not to be printed, but to say that you are the nicest creator I have ever met at a convention. I didn't know what to say to you – I was awestruck, as many are when confronted by one of their heroes. You graciously took my omnibus, signed it, then took it to Mr. Adlard to solicit a sketch on my behalf.

I love making Charlie work... it really had nothing to do with you.

There is nothing I can say about The Walking Dead that hasn't been said before; it has elicited the whole range (from reverence to disgust) of emotions that I am capable of experiencing. It works on so many levels.

One question:

There was a panel when the penitentiary was being locked down as the conflict was reaching a crescendo, and in the panel it showed (sorry for my shoddy memory with some of the character's names) the

overweight, long haired ex-con calmly walking in the upper level, in the opposite direction—where was he going? Was he going to open the gates...? While it did not amount to anything plot-wise, it scared the bejeezus out of me! Was that intentional, or was my mind making much of nothing? It just attests to the heightened awareness obtained while being engrossed in the world of TWD or in the trying times in life. But was it intentional? It works if it was or wasn't – that is why I love your books that much.

Regards,
Robert

The only panel I could find that matched your description... is one where Axel is on the tower keeping watch. He's not walking—just standing there—keeping an eye on the horizon for The Governor and his men.

P.S. Look for me at a future con, with the 2nd Omnibus volume!

Will do!

Dear Robert Kirkman,

Terrifying, horrible, grizzly, brutal...awesome!

The last time I wrote to a letters column was to Bernie Wrightson and the original Swamp Thing! As mentioned by others, I can't pull out of the parking lot before finishing the latest The Walking Dead release!

I look forward to TWD becoming an ongoing TV series, similar to Lost.

You and me both, pal!

I also enjoy tantalizing unanswered questions like: Why does it seem like the time it takes for conversion into zombies vary? Why does conversion appear to be happening more rapidly as time goes by?

Sometimes it's rapid, sometimes it's not... it depends on how the person dies, how quickly, how weak they are when they die... there's a method to it, I swear.

Would it be possible (or make any sense) to devote an issue to the perspective of a newly converted individual into the zombies? What is their perception of the world and of the living? What's going on in their brain? Is there anything left, any sense of anything (even Sophia said they looked sad)? There has to be something there – even a mosquito has a perspective of the world, even though its overt behavior is dominated by bloodlust.

People ask for this a lot... but I think it would be a pretty lame issue... it'd be completely silent—and wouldn't really have much of a point. Zombies are mindless... they don't have an inner monologue or anything.

Could the zombies be more than reanimated, mindless, rotting corpses, which logically would eventually "run out of gas" with decomposition? Could there be more to this transformation than meets the eyes of the living? Is the preoccupation with feeding and cannibalism a means to an end? Could there be ongoing metamorphosis leading to, god forbid, resurrection?

No... there couldn't be. This book just isn't about the zombies. Don't expect any huge revelations or changes in their behavior... nothing huge I mean... we'll learn a little bit more about them as the series progresses—but none of them are going to sprout wings or grow to fifty feet tall.

Thanks for the series. The story, the characters, the art, and the cliffhangers are perfect and priceless! It doesn't get any better than this!

Sincerely,
Mark

Thanks for reading.

Mr Kirkman:

The Walking Dead is great storytelling...better than most novels. It's literature, with lots of pictures (or literature partially via pictures...or something). And those poor characters...you're so good at putting them through hardship. It's so unfair!

I just got into comics recently (about a year ago). I'm a manic novel-reader, but now I'm finding that comic books are an amazing medium for storytelling. I DID read some comics as a kid (Ninja Turtles in elementary school and Jhonen Vasquez's stuff just after high-school (I saw Vasquez as an anomaly, not as a regular comics-book artist, so it didn't inspire me to look for other comics)) but it wasn't until I started reading the Madman series and Darkhorse's Conan series that I fell in love with the art and stories of the comics world (Conan is another long tale with more depth than might be expected...just like TWD!). Then I started reading everything Grendel-related, Stephen King's Dark Tower comics (Why'd he pick Marvel? Oh well, they're doing a great job!), Spawn, random graphic novels...and now the soul-wrenching, heart-breaking, brain-boggling drug that is The Walking Dead. I borrowed all 53 issues from a friend who urgently pushed them on me. Just before writing this I read #38-53 in one sitting (and I almost threw up several times... but I kept reading out of what I assume must be masochism...), but now I've got to wait a whole month between each issue! I want them all now! Write them all now!

Anyway, the purpose of the letter is to thank you for being one of the people who make comics a great medium. By doing good work you'll inspire good work, and it's great that you'll be more influential with Image now, and I'm sure you'll find some great new talents to keep us happy. My compliments to Mr. Adlard and Mr. Rathburn as well, who bring your stories to life. This is all good for comics, and good for art in general.

Lemme ask a few quick questions:

1) Grendel is a viciously independent comic. are you a fan? (You should get Matt Wagner to work for Image!)

Big fan of Grendel and a huge fan of Matt Wagner

in general. Matt's done some work here in the past, his MAGE series has found a home here—I hope he'll continue it soon.

2) Are you a Stephen King fan? I bet he's a you-fan.

I wouldn't be so sure. I just recently started reading Stephen King... my dad was always a huge fan. I'm really enjoying it so far.

3) The Spider-Man movies were an unacceptable travesty! (It's not a question and it has nothing to do with you, but I repeat that line thrice a day...Spider-Man is so cool, and those movies sucked so much! Peter Parker is a hyper-smart smart-aleck nerd, not a dopey crybaby like in the film. Un-redeemable!)

Uh... the first two were awesome. I could arm-chair quarterback the shit out of the third movie but it's still at least watchable... and the action is cool. I love me some Sam Raimi... I enjoy all his movies.

4) Any chance Image will be taking on any sci-fi endeavors (aside from Red Mass for Mars, which is gonna be too short!)? Comic sci-fi is always (always!!!!) cheesy cyber-punk... but it has the potential to equal Schild's Ladder and The Inverted World... sci-fi offers such storylines, such visuals, and it's such an open-ended genre...can you make it happen? Read The Inverted World by Christopher Priest (he wrote the book that The Prestige was based on) and you'll see that the comic world has employed criminal neglect in the sci-fi field. OR can you at least suggest a good sci-fi comic, if one exists?

I'm developing a few sci-fi series, but I'm uncertain when they'll see the light of day. I'm a big fan of the genre. Off to top of my head—I really can't think of any really good sci-fi comics... but I'm sure they're just slipping my mind.

So, keep up the good work. And even though I borrowed all the current comics for free, I will be buying each new issue, AND I have a brother who's getting some TWD collections/Omnibuses (omnib?) for Christmas.

As long as we're getting your money NOW... all is forgiven.

I can't wait for the "all out action" in #54...bullets and zombie-blood!

And Rick and Michonne need to take over a castle! That would be the perfect anti-zombie stronghold.

OK bye.
Matt Payne

A castle, hmmmm? There aren't a lot of those in The United States.

Dear "Babykiller" Kirkman,

Despite your dire warnings, it always felt like Rick might be the one character who was "safe" - I mean, he's been our connection to the story from the start. But at this point, with everything you've taken from him, killing him off would almost be a mercy. Just don't turn him into a goddamn zombie.

As much as I missed the letters, it was good to read the interviews in the last few issues. I had heard the jokes about bringing aliens into the storyline, but never knew it was a prank you had pulled in your story pitch. Funny! Anyhoo, way back when, you issued a call for zombie movie suggestions. I don't recall if any of these have been mentioned:

Braindead (or Dead Alive). How in the world did Peter Jackson get to make The Frighteners, let alone the Lord of the Rings trilogy? I suppose Dead Alive is a fun gory movie—we're talking ridiculous, way, way over-the-top gore—but as a zombie movie it's just silly.

Dead and Deader. (Starring TV's superman, Dean Cain!) It's got some hot chick! And a black comic-relief sidekick! Yeah, this one's also just silly.

Fido. Now this is a brilliant zombie movie...funny, gory, and yet charmingly sweet. (A description I didn't think I'd ever use outside of Shaun of the Dead.) I'm not spoiling anything here—Set in a 1950s-ish America, the opening "newsreel" sequence reveals that a zombie plague erupted, but was contained by the government. Zombies now wear electric collars and are used for menial labor. The movie offers a truly original take on the genre, which you don't often see. And there's some nice social commentary/satire if you want to pay attention to it. Stars Carrie-Anne Moss, Tim Blake Nelson, Billy Connelly, and Dylan Baker. Buy it. Right now.

Dexter Midnight

Thanks for the suggestions, man. I think I might go out and get Fido right now.

Mr. Kirkman,

There seems to be a bit of complaints about the length of the issues, though while I wouldn't mind a longer read, I love that each one still moves the story along while leaving you at a point in which you're dying to pick up the next issue. Honestly, that's how a comic book should read, especially one of this nature. That said, you've stated many times you want The Walking Dead to go on forever, so I assume this Washington business isn't going to end well? I suppose that's a given. Though will they even hint at what that "classified information" is?

Eventually, yes.

Also, I'm glad to see your response that Andrea and Dale are safe for the moment, though what about Michonne? She seems to get a bit of hate from the fans, at least people I've talked to, though she's actually come to be one of my favorites. So what are the chances of her making it for a bit longer? Are they going to actually reach Washington? That thing about the generator going out almost seems like a "that's what they think" moment. Either way, can't wait for the next issue.

Asia Sorenson

There's a series of questions I can't really answer without giving things away. Did I say Andrea and Dale are safe for a while? Oops.

Dear Robert,

Just finished issue #54. Abraham kicks ass! It's cool you have a soldier in the group. When are you going to kill him? Seriously, try to keep him around for a while. At least five or six more issues.

I'll do my best... no promises.

Dear Charlie,

I don't understand why people can't tell the characters apart. They all look different to me. You do a great job and I enjoy your art.

(I'll answer for Charlie) Thanks, old boy. Top of the morning to you. Cheers! Pip pip! (Charlie is British).

Dear Robert (again),

I was at Zombie Con in North Carolina a couple of weeks ago and I turned some people onto The Walking Dead. I would've thought if you were at a show called Zombie Con you would've already been reading it, but whatever. Anyway, thanks for writing this book.

Until Abraham starts carrying a trash can lid around as a shield and calling Carl "Bucky," Make Mine Kirkman.

Rob Shelor

So... until next issue then?

Kirkman-

Thanks for printing my previous letters. To be included in the pages of issue 50 was really cool, I even nerded out and bought both covers.

YAY!

Just a quick question this time: For those of us who have faithfully read every Letter Hacks since early issues (#19 in my case) how are we supposed to feel suspense at this new plot line? You've stated on multiple occasions that you don't plan on revealing the cause of the zombie outbreak, so...we already know this new "scientist" character isn't going to be right, or will never get the chance to prove his theory etc...Unless you've lied to us all this time? Or perhaps you're writing this with the folks who only buy the trades in mind?

Maybe I was saying that to throw you off—or maybe that's the LEAST important part of the upcoming storyline... either way, you shouldn't be disappointed.

Don't get me wrong, I'm excited about both the new characters, and Dale, Andrea, and the rest hitting the road again, I'm just a little disappointed in their reasons for hitting the road.

The reason is going to Washington... that should be at least somewhat exciting.

That small complaint/question aside, I really like how you're handling Rick's transition from being the "leader," but Abraham is no Tyreese. I hope you let Dale and Andrea "lead" for awhile...though I sense that there might be conflict in the future between Dale and Abraham over Andrea...

It's great to still be so excited about where this story, and Invincible are going! Not an easy thing to accomplish for over fifty issues I'm sure.

Take care,
Adam Mitchell

I'm just thankful you guys are all still interested at all. I feel very lucky to still be able to do all my books.

Okay... another issue down. I'll see you back here next month for issue 58... GUARANTEED!

—Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

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OR

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Welcome to issue 58 of The Walking Dead. My god, it seems like only yesterday I was writing issue 50 and now we're already reaching issue 60. Heck, it's all just flying by.

Well, let's do some letter answering, shall we?

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Thanks for another great issue (55). Just when I thought we were going to get 50 issues free of death to balance out the first 50, wham-o! The suicide fairy strikes again. I hope this time her visit is brief. Not to make light of the tragedy, mind you. My condolences to THE WALKING DEAD gang. While suicide is used by some to escape life's tragedies, I imagine it won't be as kind to the survivors.

I pay you this simple yet powerful compliment: Once again you have made me wonder what is going to happen next. Although judging from your comment in the previous letter column that we'll never find out what caused the zombies, I assume the slightly overweight, slightly too curious, slightly creepy government scientist is next in line to eat it.

You never know...

A couple questions/humble demands:

1. Can you please print Lori's phone number? I, like Rick, have some questions about the afterlife. I'd be willing to pay at least 15 cents a minute for such a call.

I'll see what I can do.

2. Can you please have a character with contact lenses? Please. No matter how many post-apocalyptic scenarios I've checked out, I've never seen one where someone wears contacts and has to deal with scrounging up refills, getting solution, keeping them clean, and using an old pair of glasses that constantly slides down the nose with slightest bit of nose sweats. Every time I see a disaster situation played out I always ask myself what I would do about my contacts. I want to see a character go through this dilemma so I'll know how to deal.

It's not a bad idea, really... and it's not like I haven't thought of this kind of thing before. The hunt for toothpaste, etc. The problem is the more you dwell on the mundane the more tedious the book could get... and once you crack that egg open—it starts to become obvious how much other stuff I'm ignoring. I mean there are so many little things it's assumed that they have without ever showing where they get them.

Tampons anyone?

I think some things are better left unsaid. Also, the contact issue ends with someone just using glasses... or being blind. You couldn't find new contacts in the correct prescription—it would be impossible. Solution alone would be hard to keep stocked.

I know the nuance of living in this world and the minutia of life is a large driving force of what makes this comic interesting—but y'know, gotta walk a fine line there, gotta keep things interesting.

3. Can the gang hide out in an abandoned Chuck E. Cheese? I bet they'd have a blast.

Those animatronic animal things would be totally creepy.

4. Do they have enough toilet paper?

Man... you just don't stop. Toilet paper was actually mentioned a couple times in the first few issues. I try not to dwell. Now you've got me thinking about doing "the most boring episode of The Walking Dead yet!" Start with Rick taking a dump in the woods, end with him going to sleep... hmmm. Maybe we'll see how you like that.

5. What year is the story currently in? Have they already seen how Lost ends? If not, I can take all the other stuff that they've been through, but that's a little cruel.

It's set in modern times... but the book started in 2003 and only a year has passed in the book. But that doesn't mean it's 2004 in the book... maybe it's 2009... who knows... who really cares. I don't want to be specific.

6. Please endorse me.

What the hell does this mean? Are you running for office?

7. How come we haven't seen a Waffle House yet? Bert's Chili is great!

Never had Bert's Chili... I'm an all-star special man myself.

Also, I noticed the issue of lateness keeps being addressed. Maybe I'm living in a time warp, but it feels to me like the issues have been coming out every other week. If they were to come out any faster I'd have to adjust my budget and drop Superman and Batman versus Vampires and Werewolves or Spider-Man: European Vacation.

Have a great holiday!
Eddie

EH, the book was never really that late to begin with. Sporadic maybe sure, but in the end we put out a lot of issues. Now though, I'm trying to get an issue out every month—like clockwork. I think before people complained simply because they were sick of waiting for the book... now they'll have nothing to complain about.

Hi Gentlemen,

This one's for Charlie. I read 40-50 comics per month, and have been doing so for 20+ years. I'm that guy. I've read THE WALKING DEAD since issue #1 hit the stands, and have been following all of your books for years, Mr. Kirkman. But I just put down THE WALKING DEAD #55, and I have to tell Charlie Adlard, after 48(?) beautifully drawn issues, that I think he's finally, and beautifully outdone himself. The book is a clinic in storytelling, and probably could have no dialogue at all (no offense Robert), and be utterly easy to understand from panel-to-panel, and page-to-page. This is one of the finest issues of the book, if not the very best, because it does everything the book as a whole does so well: sets the tone for the story from the outset, gives us further insight into the psychological progression and sadness that increasingly permeates the book, and shows us why the world was, is, and will always be so frightening, even when there are no zombies at all. Charlie Adlard's beautiful linework, exquisite panel choices, perfect use of shadow and darkness, and complete control and nuance of facial features make this story work on every level (Mr. Rathburn's gray tones are especially noticeable and sharp as well). Look at the beautiful rendering of the treetops at night, or the panel-by-panel progression of Rick's face while on the phone with the entirety of his own loss. It's about as good as the medium gets. And this issue is why comics is a place for unique storytelling all its own. Here's to your much deserved Eisner, Mr. Adlard. I like you too, Robert, and the rest of the gang. This book's a rare pleasure for its honesty, and all that the word entails.

My very best,
Chris Martin

I'm in complete agreement on the matter of Charlie's immense talent. He's one super-talented dude. I hope to continue working with Charlie for years and years to come. I would send him this letter but it's late and this issue needs to go to print. I know Charlie skims these letters columns for his name (and reads little else...) so I know he'll see this.

Hello Mr. Kirkman!

I'm a relatively new comics reader of about 2 years (I'm 27) and an even newer reader of TWD. I'd never read a single piece of zombie literature in my life up until when I picked up the Vol. 1 TPB on a whim about 2 weeks ago. I then proceeded to devour the remaining 7 TPBs within a week's time with the same level of insatiable, zombie-crazed appetite as the creatures in your story. I am now reduced to waiting for a month between issues like the rest of the herd. :(I found myself empathizing with the flesh-starved, exhausted zombie that the travelers discovered in Issue #55. I simply cannot get enough now!

I'm glad to hear that the issues will ship out regularly, which is such a nice treat in this day and age. Thanks a bunch for all your hard work and effort. Issue #55 was one of your best single issues to date. That ending was a doozy! I look forward to feeding again next month with #56 ...

Do you foresee more religious overtones entering the book at any point with any of the characters? After all, it is only a matter of time before a pair of zombie Mormon missionaries come by to "convert" Rick and the others ...

-Chitty

Religion will always play a role of some kind in the book—it will take a somewhat more front and center role starting very soon... for at least some time. Look for it.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I'd like to start by saying that THE WALKING DEAD is the best comic I've ever read. It was also the book that introduced me to the other great series that you write. Lately, I've been going to the comic shop and just buying anything with your name on it. Where do you find the time to put out all these comics? Anyway, on to the questions...

1) On the last page of issue #55, it shows that Maggie apparently hangs herself. When I turn a couple pages to check out the preview for next month's issue, there's Maggie (among others) on the cover!!!! This confused the hell outta me until I did some research (ok so all I did was go to www.image.com) and found out that issue 56 is just gonna be some kind of retrospective type deal. I need to know what happens next. WTF BOB?!

Well, you know now that Maggie in fact, didn't die. Sorry for the confusion.

2) What is the purpose of the zombie that was too weak to move in 55? Are you using it to show that the zombies can only "survive" for a few months as undead and that the first people that turned are starting to die off? Are our heroes going to find some new way to fend them off? Please tell me that this doesn't signify the beginning of the end (of the series).

This series is not ending any time soon. Don't worry. The zombie in issue 55 was just a small hint as to the nature of the zombies existence and will lead to more eventually. Stay tuned.

3) Being a huge fan of INVINCIBLE, I was excited to hear about you and Cory Walker working together again on the Destroyer book. My question is, if you are a partner at Image now, why are you putting that book out under Marvel? (Here's a good opportunity to talk about how great I am. -Aubrey)

I'm leaving Aubrey's comment in there just to show what a good editor he's being by giving me subjects to discuss in the letters column. Destroyer is a book editor supreme, Aubrey Sitterson put together at Marvel before either of us left that fine company. So it's something I had written entirely well before Marvel and I parted ways. After Cory and I did issues 7 and 8 of The Irredeemable Ant-Man for Aubrey at Marvel, Aubrey came to me with the idea of reviving DESTROYER for the MAX line and having Cory and I do the book. It was a blast to do the series and I'm very proud of it. I think you'll all enjoy it. I'm happy to report Cory is currently working on issue 4 of the series, and it will be starting in April.

4) When are you taking back over writing duties on Brit? After reading the first trade, I was pretty pumped about having another ongoing series to look forward to every month. But after reading a few issues, I just couldn't get into it and stopped buying them. I'm just not into this Bruce Brown guy's style of writing. Sorry dude.

No, I'm sorry it's not your cup of tea. I think it's a pretty excellent series, but it is coming to an end with issue 12, which should already be out. You'll be happy to know that I did co-write the last issue as well as write a 10 page back-up featuring the origin of Brit. Check it out. There will be more Brit eventually... but the form it will take is still undecided.

Anyway, thanks for giving me something to spend money on every week and good luck in your new position at Image!!!

-Bob Lavay

Thanks! I need all the luck I can get. So far it's been great—big plans for the future.

Robert-

Why can we "hear" Lori's voice when Rick talks to her on the phone?

I understand WHY he's talking to her and I totally buy it, but it just seems weird that we as readers have access to the voices in his head.

We never heard whom Michonne was talking to and it seems that up until now we've been kinda like flies on the wall in terms of witnessing the unfolding story. This new development feels WAY more interactive than the rest of the series and I think it is a little off-putting ...

I dunno ... I guess I'm mainly just curious about the inclusion of this particular narrative device.

Any thoughts?

I could argue that Rick is the central character of the book and so it would be impossible to have told this part of his story without allowing you to hear Lori—and I'd be right too. Is it a bit inconsistent, yes, and I'm sorry if you find it off putting... I just didn't see any other way to tell the story in an effective way.

-Hank

P.S. I also understand that in savage and unjust times (such as what is seen in THE WALKING DEAD) people would certainly suffer from unfathomable injuries made worse by the absence of any medical professionals, but I was curious if, based on the outcome of many characters, you perhaps had a little bit of an amputee fetish? (Another opportunity to talk about why you hired me, pervert. -Aubrey)

And the truth comes out. I hired Aubrey because he is, indeed an amputee.

Zee Robert Kirkman,

When I was 10 I used to love the Batman comics. Before I could get heavy into comics my parents moved and I never bought another one. 13 years later, about a year ago, I'm in the middle of the ocean on a US Naval warship bored out of my mind when I see my friend DJ reading THE WALKING DEAD: Vol 1 & 2. I'm a huge fan of anything related to zombies, so even though I figured comics to be for kids, I had to ask him about it.

After we got done talking, and DJ got done reading, he let me borrow it. The first chance I had I went online and bought all the volumes available. I loved them so much I started buying issues and I'm always pissed when I reach the end because I want more. DJ and I

talking even caused other people we work with to read your work and they loved it too. It's hard not to love Zed.

Now I'm venturing out into other comic series to see what's out there and I'm enjoying it. One thing that DJ and I talked about was how we always thought zombie movies and books had a 99% chance of going wrong when they solved the Z mystery/started to turn the story into how Zed became Zed. Because of this I really hope that new character is full of crap or you are that 1%. Maybe it's a little of both.

We'll see! At the very least—we got at least 60 or so good issues out before it went downhill—right? Right?

DJ and I also think this would make a kick-ass HBO mini-series. If you have any suggestions on other comics please let me know.

Y: The Last Man... The Sword... Wasteland... Fell... Criminal... I'm trying to recommend books that would appeal to you if you did The Walking Dead. There are plenty of great books out there right now.

Congratulations on 50+ and becoming a part of Image.

Thank you,
Dan

PS: I don't suppose there is a way that I would be able to buy any of the original artwork would I? I like collecting art and would love to add a comic to my non-existent comic art collection.

There certainly is. If you go to www.splashpageart.com and go to the Charlie Adlard section you'll find a bevy of his art there. Also, Tony Moore still has a surprising number of pages left for sale from issues 1-6 of this series (at least, last time I checked) so you could hit www.tonymooreillustration.com if you wanted some of that.

Well, with that—another issue down. Cool.

See you all back here next month.

—Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

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C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 1870
RICHMOND, KY 40476

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

And here we are at issue 59. What fun. Big stuff in store for this book. Big stuff. I'm really looking forward to getting there.

Do let's not waste any time. Letters.

Mr. Kirkman-

Just read issue #57. I love this comic so I have to tell you, don't you fucking dare kill Carl! You've got a kid, you sick bastard so you know Rick will be fucked too. Just please don't do it. Please.

Matt Coppins

You dare me? I'll do it... I swear I will!

Hi Robert,

This is literally the first time I've ever written fanmail to anybody. I only found out about your comic through some zombie internet link - I never knew it existed until about a week ago. You'll be glad to hear that I'm already up to date with the series. It is hands-down the best zombie media I've ever come across. It's so open ended it's perfect. You have the freedom to continue the story as long as you need too, where I always feel that same bite of annoyance with ANY zombie film, because they all have to end and the end is 99% of the time either they all die or the military save their asses! But with this you've shown us what its like for the few who survive longest, because they would! There would always be SOME survivors out there.

Right on.

I know there are other zombie comics out there, but none of them have the gritty realism of this one - you've really hit something here man! One thing I was wondering is if you have any plans to make a TV series (note I don't say film for the obvious above reasons) but a TV show could totally work and it'd be the best shit ever!

Here's hoping.

Anyways I hope you print this, It'd be dead good! LOL

Your pal,
Connor

(By the way, I'm in Ireland here. Not sure if you've got any mail from this far afield yet?)

I don't keep track... Ireland, seems like I have but who knows. You might be special... but probably not. My wife has always wanted to visit your find country.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

First off, thanks for rejuvenating my interest in the comic book genre after 30 years away. Zombies rule.

A question for you though, that I'm wondering if you'll address ...

Gasoline, when not used, tends to deteriorate after several months, eventually turning into a rather nasty varnish-like substance. After a year, the gas will burn very poorly and even damage an engine with gummy deposits. After five years, it's a pretty safe bet that most of the available gasoline would be unusable, creating a new challenge for our survivors. Are you going to address this or am I just being a nitpicky pain in the ass? This is driving me crazy.

Keep up the great work,
JD Ryan

We've all heard this before! Lame! They've only been at this a year, I'm thinking they'll be out of gasoline entirely before we hit the five year mark. We're fudging things a bit, to be sure... but y'know, the dead don't usually get up and walk around in real life either? I do try to keep things as realistic as possible, so I really appreciate comments like this

and I don't meant to just casually dismiss them. The won't be using gasoline eventually in the book... unless they're able to refine and make their own.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

That was a great issue. First off, how do I word this without sounding like a pedophile ... thank you? I understand that rape, especially with children, is a difficult subject to write, but the fact that you did it and pulled it off really made this comic stand out as one of the best things I've ever read. More often than not, writers skip things like that, or allude to it, and I appreciate that you had the balls to include it in TWD. Anyway, the reason I'm writing is I had a few questions.

1.) I understand zombies aren't the point of TWD, but is there any chance we'll see some kind of evolving from them? I was thinking along the lines of intelligence as in Land of the Dead, not actual growth.

The zombies will not evolve. I've lifted enough from Romero. What is happening though--is that we'll slowly learn more and more about the zombies and how they work as we go along. The unique, weak zombie recently found is an indication of things to come.

2.) Do zombies grow? Like, if someone turns as a teenager and they survive, say, 10 years, are they going to still look like a teenager?

Yes. They would always stay the same age. The body is not functioning the way a living body does. The cells are not regenerating like ours do (or whatever that's called).

3.) Why is Rick willing to travel to D.C. when he knows cities are insanely infested with zombies, and he wants to keep Carl safe?

Time has passed... if any city in the world would be cleaned up by now--logically, it would be D.C. I'm sure he'll still be cautious... if they make it there.

4.) Finally, I know you've mentioned that you do have an end in mind for this series ... This doesn't have anything to do with the whole "going to DC because I know what started the plague" thing, right? I'd like to see TWD make it to at least Issue #100, if not #150.

That's all.
Joseph Jobes

The story doesn't end in Washington... assuming they even make it there.

Dear Mr.
Kirkman,

That was the literally the most horrific thing I have ever seen or read. It made me cry. Please, please stop being mean to Rick and Carl. I don't think I can take it.

Your Fan,
Jonny Lang

Yeah, I'll probably have to back off sooner or later.

Kirkman,

I've been reading a few issues of TWD. Here in Mexico it's fucking hard, near impossible, to find the comic. You need to improve the distribution - the few I have cost me near 10 dollars for each 3 dollar issue. That's damn expensive, you need to bring this shit to Mexico.

I'll see what I can do.

I have a few questions

1. Can dead animals also become zombies, like horses or deer?

Nope. Just the peeps.

2. Are you going to tell us what caused the damn infection?

That would be telling. It remains to be seen. Stick with it.

3. Are you planning to make a videogame of TWD?

Well, that's not up to me, but I'd LOVE to do that if anyone out there is in the industry and interested... get in touch.

I also have a complaint: you shouldn't have kill Axel ... too soon.

Well, that's all. Hope you print this.

Jorge Ruelas

Yeah... I'm right there with you on Axel... I miss that guy... a lot.

Dear Comrade Kirkman,

I just wanted you to know that your little comic book has driven me INSANE! My life is in SHAMBLES! My girlfriend is ready to leave me if I don't stop talking about the latest issue. I can't eat. I can't sleep. I'm like one of your so beautifully illustrated zombies, I HUNGER FOR MORE! The sad thing about all of this is that I only started reading TWD about a week ago. I

finished all 57 issues in a little over a week. It has gotten a little out of control fast. I must say though, in all seriousness, that this comic has officially turned me on to comics. Of course I had read plenty of superhero comics in my day, but this comic has ruined me. I'm afraid to pick up anything else. Afraid it's just going to be a let-down. I have found myself for the first time ever, caring for characters in a book. The strange thing is, I'm an avid reader. I couldn't begin to count the novels and short stories I've read over the years, but never have I ever found myself saddened by a characters death or misfortune. I applaud you Mr. Kirkman. You are truly a master of your craft.

Pretty much anything by Garth Ennis and Brian K. Vaughan would kind of blow The Walking Dead out of the water... I mean, let's be honest. I kick the shit out of Bendis though.

It's also nice to see such a quality publication come out of Kentucky. I live in a very small town in Western Kentucky and it gets a little old having everyone think nothing comes out of this state but meth addicts and backwood racist rednecks. It's very refreshing.

Oh, yeah... how do you explain Abraham Lincoln, Johnny Depp, George Clooney or Larry Flynt?!

Also props to Adlard, Rathburn, and Wooton for their contribution to the publication as well. Keep up the good work guys, and I'll be on pins and needles until the next issue.

Grant Stanley

Yeah... don't forget to mention THOSE guys.

Dear Kirkman,

Thanks for releasing the issues in rapid succession. It's something I've never had a problem with though - as long as the quality remains the same, I can wait.

Good, because it'll soon be "Late as sin in 2010." This year is killing me!

Issue #57 struck a cord with me; we've seen all sorts of horror in the book but somehow the incident with Carl seems like the most poignant yet (and that's saying something). Rick's helplessness could not have been portrayed better. In his desperation to free his son, he had to enact what his primary threat has been doing all along. Justified, given the situation, but also further mirroring the survivors and the walking dead. This has been another horrible moment to witness in the series, but as always compelling.

This book has been my new Preacher in the sense that I can loan it off to friends and colleagues that aren't into comics to begin with and in every case they've headed out to their local LCS for the first time and bought the trades. It is the added twist of indie publishing that also drives them to it - not unlike buying music and apparel from an indie band in order to support them directly. It's important to point out how rewarding this is to consumers. You should be very proud of this achievement.

As for Charlie, Cliff & Rus, you could not have a more perfect team for this book's visuals. Stunning work all around, keep it up!

Thank you,
Simon Mallette

Thanks for all the kind words, Simon.

Mr. Kirkman,

The Walking Dead is awesome.

Okay... good start, keep going...

I wanted to keep this letter absurdly short so it would fit the motif of your newly shrunken letters column.

Thanks for the zombies.
Jason

Wow... I shouldn't print this out of spite -but I will anyway, because this letter sucks! Don't be like Jason, kids. Write GOOD letters... please!

Okay, better luck next time. See you in a few.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Okay, issue 60... the big six-o... if we were a person we'd be nearing retirement age! Ha!

Anyway, we have no intention of slowing down, in fact, I hope you've all noticed just how much we've sped up. As of typing this, we've hit all our dates in 2009 so far and show no signs of missing any coming up (as I type this 61 is in the can and Charlie is already hard at work on 62).

Good times.

So let's answer a little mail here.

Mr. Kirkman,

First, I just want to say again (cuz I know I put this in my first letter to you as well) that you are hands-down my favorite writer right now. I have been reading everything you write and all of it has been golden.

I just finished issue #58 of *The Walking Dead*... geez. I thought the LAST issue was crazy! I am supremely happy that Rick and Abraham had the conversation that they did. I thought Abraham was going to become a problem and Rick was going to have to kill him. Now I am really starting to like Abraham (which of course means he will die). The scene in the beginning where Rick, Abraham and Carl had their talk...it almost brought me to tears. The rest of the comic could have been empty and I would have been ok with that. That first part is one of my all-time favorites now from the entire series.

Cool, I'm glad people are liking Abraham as much as I do. When I conceived his character... before ever actually writing him, I had a MUCH different arc planned for him. You guys should press for me to tell that story in a letters column sometime. I'm glad I scrapped the whole plan.

I was happy to see Morgan again, but not at all surprised that his son had been turned. I WAS surprised however to see that he had not killed him and had in fact been feeding him...that was a little disturbing. It may make me sound heartless but I would have shot him in a second. But then again, I am prepared for when the zombies come, lol.

You never know...

One last question, then I am all done...Why haven't you accepted my friend invite on MySpace? j/k

Because I'm extremely inconsistent with my Myspace visits. I sometimes do go to the site for months on end—and friend invites just sit there.

Your ever loyal reader and comic store employee, Jessica Mikesch (yes I am a girl)

Yay for girls!

Dearest Kirkman,

I love your book. I love you. I've never written a letter before. (Sounding familiar?)

It's pretty cool knowing you live around the shithole town of Richmond, Kentucky. It was even cooler seeing Barnes Mill road referenced in *The Walking Dead*.

Man... where'd I do that? I don't even remember. And hey—Richmond isn't a shithole!

To the point, though.

I'm finishing up a degree in creative writing here at Eastern Kentucky University and wanted to let you know that your book has profoundly affected my writing. I don't write shitty zombie stories or fan-fiction, but your storytelling is top notch and almost makes me want to. (I promise I won't.) That's not due to the plot, it's because of your characters and character development. Some people don't get that. It's not always plot, it's the characters that make the story. I think I could read a whole issue about Rick shitting in a hole just because I like his character and because, of course, Adlard and Rathburn make him look so sexy. (I also promise I'm not into scat.)

This letter took a turn...

To the questions and requests now.

1. Please do another spread with all the

character's pictures and whether they've bit it or not. It was cool seeing how many people you've killed. This was my friend Tristan's idea. (That guy who worked at Hastings and would awkwardly try to talk to you.)

Oh, yeah... I remember him. I'll try to do that soon... it's a busy time for the book.

2. Will you be coming to Eastern again to lecture? I missed the first one for whatever reason. I'd like to hear it.

I haven't been asked. I might do it if they asked again.

3. Please don't let Hollywood fuck *The Walking Dead* and leave it behind, bitter and broken.

Projecting, much? You want to talk about it?

4. I know you've read John Joseph Adams' *The Living Dead* because your quote is on the back of it, but have you read *Wastelands*? It's incredible. Especially the story "Still Life With Apocalypse." It sets my mind on fire.

Haven't read *wastelands*... might have to look that up.

5. Shout out to Keith who ran Warlords Unlimited here in Richmond. He was a cool dude. I miss him.

Did he die?

AND.

6. Most Important. Seriously. Soon, someone at Comic Oasis will ask you if you have some back issues of *TWD* including #55. Please give #55 up. I need it as much as you need store credit. Thanks, man.

Man... this letter is almost useless to anyone outside of Richmond. I think I've already done this, but if I haven't just tell Ron to bug me about it.

That's it. If I see you here in Richmond sometime I'll probably just stare at you awkwardly and from a distance. I hear I can (unfortunately) resemble David Spade, so if you see me staring at you give me a wave.

I'll just have my security people remove you—no big deal. Stare away!

Take it easy man and keep up the good work. I'll send you a copy of my book if I ever get it out of my head.

Your friend,
Matt McAlister

Good luck with it.

Dear Kirkman,

The Walking Dead #58 wasn't really UNTHINKABLE, although when you flashed this

issue's cover last month I'm sure most of us were misled into thinking that Rick was about to lose Carl. What I would call this issue is HEARTBREAKING. For some reason, Morgan and Duane who had appeared only twice in this series before, had somehow lived on in my head, in a bubble of hope and safety. Now that bubble has burst, and the landscape looks somehow bleaker.

Have you heard of Zack Snyder's new studio? It's called Cruel and Unusual Films. Cruel and unusual...just like this series. I have to be a masochist. As I told you in person at San Diego Comic-Con, I've been here since issue #6, and this series is still my favorite. Looking forward to the Washington story.

Victor Rosario Fermain

Yeah, Zack was telling me all about it the other day...

Baby-Killer,

It's the week of Valentines Day (issue #58) and I don't have a woman. Since I can't blame myself I'm going to blame you. I'm not an ugly guy. I have my own house, a job that pays well, I'm still young and I have my health. But, there's something about a 24-year-old dude that reads baby-killing comics that drives some women away. But, you have a woman and you don't just read comics...you write them. Since you have a kid, that's proof that you get some. I'm jealous. Does she know you're a baby-killer? In retrospect...it might not have been you. It might have been me when I called Jesus the first zombie. Don't just take my word for it. Dictionary.com says, "noun: a dead body that has been brought back to life by a supernatural force."

Y'know, writing comics is way cooler than just reading them. There's a hierarchy to this. It'd be easier for me to get chicks. Sheesh. Anyway, good luck with it. You're still young, there's time.

Numbered question time...

1. Since it's Jesus would I have to capitalize Zombie when in reference to him?

I believe so.

B. What does your title of "Chief Operating Officer" actually mean?

I'm the guy making sure the chiefs operate properly. Heh "B."

3. Are we going to see another bad-ass 2-page-spread anytime soon like the one of the Governor and his head-tanks?

I'm sure eventually we will.

4. I didn't realize Adlard was from England. Are we going to see any foreign people? It would be awesome to have a crazy Scottish dude with a

bastard sword. Maybe he and Michonne could get into a sword fight.

Then I'd be compelled to write a horrible accent. So no.

E. Where are the "Ted Nugents" and "Charlton Hestons" of the zombie apocalypse?

Living on farms and having a good time? Heh "E."

6. To Charlie and Cliff: What has been your favorite part of *The Walking Dead* where you just had to look at your art and say, "Wow! That is my art. How bad-ass am I?" To which Kirkman and I would respond, "Extremely Bad-Ass!"

I don't have time to write them and get a response... I mean, I gotta have this turned in in a few minutes. But Charlie would probably say "Each and every page, old chap!"

7. When your kid (a girl right?) does career-day at school and she brings you in are you going to freak all the kids out with pictures of zombies eating people? You could tell them that if they study real hard in school they could be a biochemist and one day make zombies a reality. That would be awesome. You might even make it on the local news or CNN. Imagine the sales spike!

Thanks again,
Dan

My oldest is a son, by the time this sees print I should have a daughter as well... but y'know, The Walking Dead isn't THE ONLY thing I write. I could just as easily bring in pages from Space Ace or Ultimate X-Men to show them.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Issue #58 was, as usual, a great read. It's a nice examination of the stress the characters are facing and an insight into where their humanity struggles to make sense of the post-apocalyptic world they face. Specifically, where they find their own violent selves in a violent world, but retain a sense of right and wrong when everything has gone wrong.

I'm sure you'll get plenty of letters commenting on all the story nuance from others though.

Would you be able to answer more of a "mechanical" question about your writing process? How far out do you plot the series you write? Do you have a rough idea of what the next arc looks like? The next year? Or, have you figured this out for a few hundred issues? Just curious.

Thanks for some great tales!

Regards,
Frank Bergdoll

Well, I have a loose idea for the next 100 issues, but really it's pretty vague once it gets past 12 issues away and gets more and

more vague the farther ahead plans get. I try to make sure I have a solid plan for the future at all times... otherwise I'd just be making stuff up. That said, I am able to change my mind and go in drastically different directions of the urge hits me. It's pretty fun, let me tell you.

Master Kirkman,

Well, you did it somehow. You followed up just as strong with issue #58 as you did with #57. Not only did you bring Rick and Abraham together but, you gave us a look at the darkest side of Carl. I love how the characters finally get that in this new world of the Dead you have to be a cold blooded killer in order to survive. That doesn't make you a bad person though. You can kill Mother Teresa and still be a good person as long as you believe that you had to do it!

You're making me feel so much better about myself.

Again you surprised me with Carl's revelation that he is also a black-hearted killer (and a kid too!). This new guy is going to be some real trouble but, Rick, fresh off of Carl's close encounter would be a hypocrite to abandon his old friend just because he murdered a few living people to feed to his zombie son! I just hope Abraham understands too or he will be a very short-lived member of the group.

Now as far as Dale is concerned, he is in big trouble. Abraham isn't going to take lightly to him trying to leave the group (especially if he tries to take any supplies with him) but, more importantly Dale doesn't realize how closely bonded Rick and Abraham are now. Rick isn't going to let Dale abandon him again (even though he was right to leave the prison). My money is on Dale being the next one to die and it being done by someone in the group.

Thanks for another great issue!
Allen S

Let's start taking bets...

Awesome, that's it, kids. Now, if you keep turning pages, you should see a pretty sweet glimpse of things to come in this series. What follows this letters column is a series of promo images we did for online news places to promote The Walking Dead.

The storyline starts in issue 62, be sure to tell your friends!

Also, the covers may or may not contain spoilers... so really, look at your own risk.

See you guys back here next month for issue!!

—Robert Kirkman

THE DEAD DO NOT

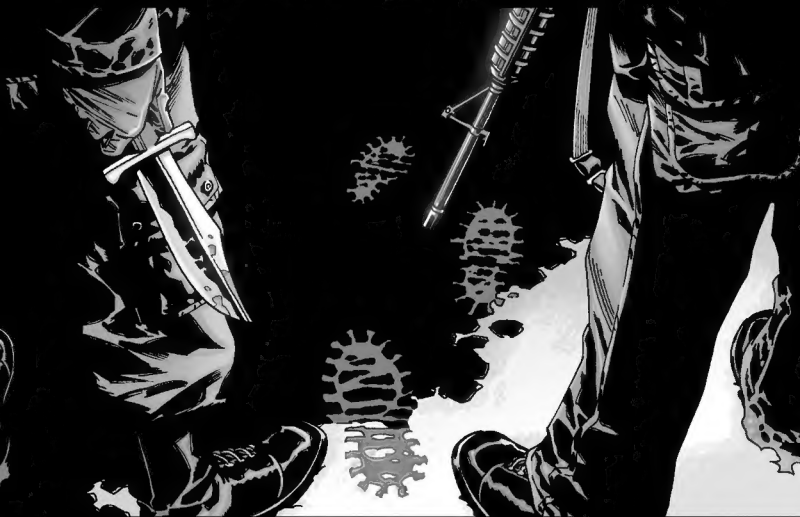


STALK

THE WALKING
DEAD



THE DEAD DO NOT



TRACK

THE WALKING
DEAD



THE DEAD DO NOT



WATCH

THE WALKING
DEAD



THE DEAD DO NOT



HUNT

THE WALKING
DEAD



THE DEAD DO NOT HUNT



BUT WE DO

THE WALKING
DEAD

